

5 Cents

THE
RED BOOK

May 1926

M A G /

and Crompton —



*Mary
Roberts
Rinehart's*
New
**MYSTERY
Novel**

Also
Robert W. Chambers,
Rupert Hughes,
Leroy Scott, Ben Hecht,
Harold Mac Grath,
Julian Street
and *Others*

Thirty-one Paris Shades

The illustration suggests two smart effects in the new shades. With the dress at the left might be worn either *Moonlight* or *Dawnbreak*, two exquisitely light shades.

With the gown at the right *Atmosphere*, *Blush*, or *Champagne*, would be very smart and correct.



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On These 5 Things Depends the Style Correctness of Your Hosiery

Not one, says fashion, can be overlooked. Now see how Holeproof safeguards smartness by unique fashion features millions know.

To be correct

- sheer chiffons must be superlatively clear.
- only the colors new in Paris, bright and non-fading.
- no shadow rings, no streaks.
- no loose threads inside.
- free from style-destroying flaws.

Holeproof Hosiery

HOLEPROOF HOSIERY COMPANY
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN
HOLEPROOF HOSIERY COMPANY
OF CANADA, LIMITED
LONDON, ONT.

IN ordinary hosiery are several faults Paris will not excuse. Often they lie hidden until you put hosiery on.

So, experts who know the science of fine weaving, have evolved five unique safeguards. Each is a special feature that protects against the common flaws. In even the sheerest chiffons imperfections disappear because of them.

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1—**Exquisite clearness.** In sheer chiffons clearness comes only with the use of uniformly even thread. The lack of it in cheaper silk causes unsightly shadow rings. So at greater cost Holeproof selects China silk, judged finest of all oriental grades.

2—**Correct Paris shades.** Paris authorities select the newest colors. A unique scientific dyeing

process keeps them clear and bright. Our anti-fade treatment protects from fading.

3—**Superlative transparency.** Even in the heavier weights. There is no cloudiness, no streaks. First the silk is specially tested, then it undergoes the special Holeproof treatment.

4—**No loose ends.** Loose threads mar appearance. So Holeproof carefully trims the inside of each stocking by hand.

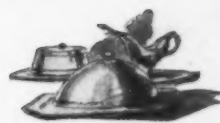
5—**No Imperfections.** Style vanishes with imperfections. And here Holeproof safeguards you by nine separate inspections. It is a fact that few other fine hose are so uniformly perfect.

Every Holeproof stocking has this five-fold fashion safety. Go to your Holeproof shop today. New French colors and new styles have just arrived. See the smart chiffons, from \$1.00 to \$2.25. Special all silk chiffon \$1.95.

Food... the pleasure of our palates

Food... the trouble-maker for our teeth

and gums!



A DELICIOUS dinner at an attractive restaurant—a dainty luncheon at home. How enjoyable they are, how much a part of our lives! Yet dentists point to our modern soft food as utterly unsuited to supply the stimulation our gums and teeth need so much.

AS we gather round a festive board to enjoy a delicious dinner, with its succulent viands and its creamy sauces, few of us give a thought to anything but taste—the physical pleasure of eating!

Yet these same dinners that “melt in the mouth,” are the cause of most of those stubborn troubles that beset our gums and our teeth. For under our modern regime of soft food the gums are cheated of the stimulation they need to keep them in perfect health. Rough, fibrous foods, nature's own stimulant for our gums and teeth, are practically absent from our present-day diet.

How massage and Ipana help the gums to health

And this stimulation, the dentists tell us, must be restored, if our gums are to be firm and healthy, instead of dormant and weak—the prey to many kinds of troubles.

So, very logically, the dentists are urging gum massage with the tooth brush to supply this stimulation—to quicken the flow of fresh blood through the tiny capillaries that nourish the gums. And thousands of dentists, to whom our professional men have demonstrated Ipana Tooth Paste, recommend that the massage be done with Ipana.

For Ipana's ziratol con-

tent will make the gums more resistant to the onset of disease. For years ziratol has been used by dentists in their practice, to restore tone to the gums and to allay bleeding.

Many dentists are advising the use of Ipana

Ask your own dentist about Ipana. He will probably vouch for its benefits. In fact it was by professional recommendation that Ipana first became known.

So, if your tooth brush ever “shows pink,” start to use Ipana immediately. Simply massage the gums gently with the brush after the usual cleanings with Ipana.

And even if your gums never bother you, remember that Ipana will enable you to keep them in perfect health!

Switch to Ipana for at least a full month!

The coupon offers a ten-day tube. Use it if you wish. But when the health of the gums and teeth is concerned, persistence is of first importance.

So, next time you are at your druggist's get a full-sized tube. While you are using Ipana, you will enjoy a new sense of oral cleanliness, and your gums will be started on the way to normal firmness and health.

Even though your gums bother you seldom or never, start your use of Ipana today. For the best time to fight gum troubles is before they start.



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— made by the makers of Sal Hepatica



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Address.....

City..... State.....

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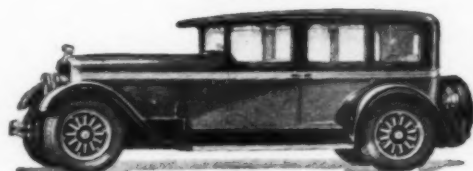
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All bodies especially designed
under the supervision of

Brewster
of New York



The NEW STUTZ with Safety Chassis



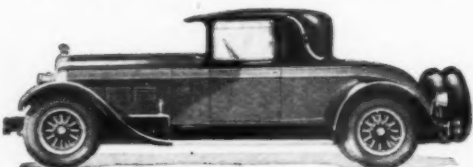
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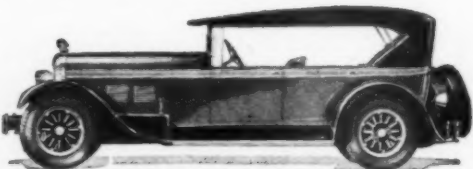
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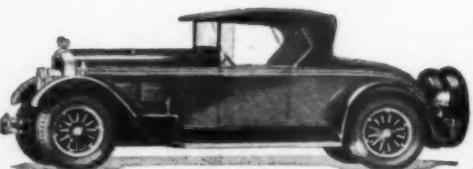
The NEW STUTZ 4-passenger VICTORIA COUPE



The NEW STUTZ 2-passenger COUPE



The NEW STUTZ 4-passenger SPEEDSTER



The NEW STUTZ 2-passenger SPEEDSTER

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Master body-builders have long awaited the day when a chassis should so be engineered that the body of the car could be designed on ideal lines —when the last trace of horse-drawn vehicle traditions could be discarded—when an automobile could be modeled on a pure automobile form, appropriate to the automobile's service and scope, reflecting the automobile's power and speed, bespeaking the automobile's dignity and importance.

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Narrow front-corner pillars allow full vision; windshields are of safety-glass; seat springs are of full depth, and very luxurious; the upholstery is of the finest, rich and distinctive; there are comfortable arm-rests and lolling-straps; vanity-cases and other voguish fittings add smartness and convenience; all door-handles and other interior metal parts are of exclusive design. Ventilators on all closed-body doors give air circulation at all times.

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"70"



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The RED BOOK Magazine

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Has been missed from these pages during the past few months because of the long "sporting tour" of America that he has been making. Now, however, he comes to bat again with some of the greatest stories he has ever written. The first of this series will appear in the next issue. Look for the title:

"GOSPEL
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Yes or No?

By HENRY WELLINGTON WACK, F. R. G. S.

Associate Director, Camp Department, THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

"YES" and "No"—these are the twain that rule the world. Beside them, all other monarchs become impotent.

"Yes" is easy—"No" is not! Yet each of us, while obeying these inexorable masters, must learn to employ them wisely, promptly and effectively. Otherwise we fail of life—its wonderful harvest of achievement, wealth, power and happiness.

The man who cannot say "No" at the right time and place, is the "easy mark" of the crook and the parasite. He makes crime successful; helps to fill our jails, almshouses and bankruptcy courts; he encourages vice and does more injury to society with his easy "Yes" than all the rest of us do with our idle "Damns."

Inclination often says "Yes" when reason would say "No." As it is unfortunately true that many men and women selfishly strive for gain and advantage over others, reason and common sense would use at least ten No's to one Yes, in the material affairs of life.

The great Confucius, wisest of Chinese philosophers, said that "to see what is right, and not to do it, is want of courage, or of principle." In our current judgments between right and wrong, these autocrats, "Yes" and "No" do or fail to do that which should be done. Each "Yes" and "No" we utter is a wise or an unwise decision; a wrong or a right, a help or a hindrance that affects other human beings.

It is a great privilege—this constant use of "Yes" and "No." The knowledge required to use them with justice to ourselves and to others, is a wisdom none of us inherits from nature. It is, on the contrary, as Voltaire said, "the fruit of labors, the price of courage." The weak and the ignorant, the soft and sentimental, the young and impulsive follow the easiest way, and often say "Yes" when they should say "No." They say "Yes" from the heart, not from the head. They are wiser only when their errors over-

whelm them, when they have been sunk in failure, poverty or worse.

What is worse than always saying Yes? Yes, is the cowardice that says "No" to everything—to the sun because it glows and to the rain because it is wet.

It is in our qualified summer camps that boys and girls are taught to *think* before acting, to *reason* before deciding, to be as prompt as they are careful in judgment; and to maintain a courage commensurate with duty and responsibility.

The training boys and girls get in a good camp qualifies them to say "No" effectively and "Yes" inspirationally at the right time and place. In such camps their hearts are given "eyes of which the brain knows nothing," as Dr. Parkhurst once said. They are taught in a school of happy daily experience that common sense is the "knack of seeing things as they are, and doing things as they ought to be done." Common sense is as useful as small change; exalted sense is like a million-dollar bank note that nobody can use.

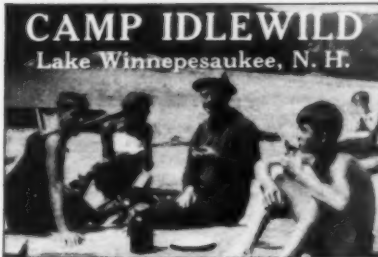
When we have learned to say "No" justly, our "Yes" will take care of itself. Our "Yes" will have ceased to serve impulse, inclination and indiscretion. The things camp-trained boys and girls learn to do with their heads, hearts and hands out in the open, are the things that, when geared to common sense, teach them when to say "Yes" and when to say "No." There is nothing like a good summer camp to teach us natural wisdom.

Our camp observer has surveyed more camps than any other living camper. We know where the good camps are. Our school and camp service to parents is free. If you need advice, consult our Department of Education.

The children of today will be the men and women of tomorrow *who will have to know when to say "Yes" and when to say "No!"*

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE'S CAMP SECTION

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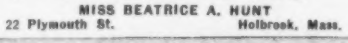
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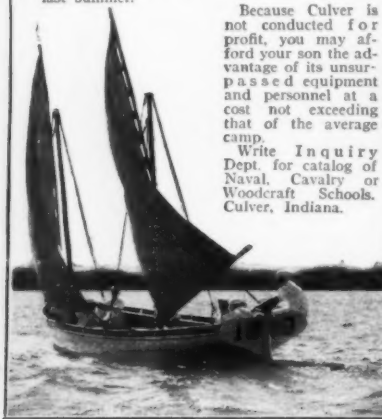
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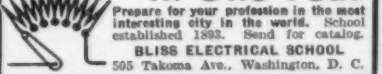
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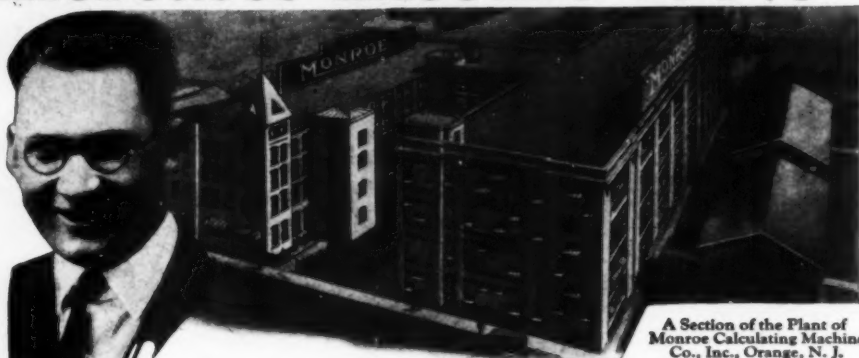
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- ☐ **Industrial Management:** Training for position in Works Management, Production Control, Industrial Engineering, etc.
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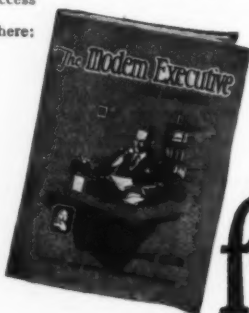
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Even the trying light of afternoon does not dim the woman who uses her corrections of Pompeian Bloom for the desired note of color in her cheeks.



The blonde with very fair skin finds a natural tone for her cheeks in the Light Bloom or the new Oriental tint.

Perfectly Natural

Pompeian Bloom gives your cheeks a color exquisitely natural

By MADAME JEANNETTE

Famous cosmetician, retained by The Pompeian Laboratories as a consultant to give authentic advice regarding the care of the skin and the proper use of beauty preparations.

I RECENTLY overheard one of my friends say to another: "You, for one, need no rouge, my dear. What lovely natural coloring!" But the truth was this—like thousands of other women, she had found a rouge that gave her cheeks the exquisite natural coloring of a girl in her teens. That rouge is Pompeian Bloom.

Today women everywhere realize the necessity of using rouge that matches perfectly their natural skin-tones. And when they use the right shade of Bloom the wholly natural effect is achieved.

From the shade chart you can easily select the particular shade of Pompeian Bloom for your type of complexion.

SHADE CHART for selecting your correct tone of Pompeian Bloom

Medium Skin: The average American woman has the medium skin-tone—pleasantly warm in tone, with a faint sugges-

tion of old ivory or sun-kissed russet. The *Medium* tone of Pompeian Bloom just suits this type of skin.

If you are slightly tanned, you may find the *Orange* tint more becoming. And sometimes women with medium skin who have very dark hair get a brilliant result with the *Oriental* tint.

Olive Skin: Women with the true olive skin are generally dark of eyes and hair—and require the *Dark* tone of Pompeian Bloom. If you wish to accent the brilliancy of your complexion, the *Oriental* tint will accomplish it.

Pink Skin: This is the youthful skin, most often found in blondes or red-haired women, and should use the *Oriental* tint.

White Skin: If you have this rare type of skin, use the *Light* tone of Bloom.

Special Note: An unusual coloring of hair and eyes sometimes demands a different selection of Bloom-tone from those above. If in doubt, write a description of your skin, hair and eyes to me for special advice.

Pompeian Bloom, 60c (slightly higher in Canada). Purity and satisfaction guaranteed.

Madame Jeannette
Specialiste en Beauté

SPECIAL OFFER

1/3 of a 60c box of Bloom,
the 1926 Panel, with three valuable Pompeian samples—all for 20c

THIS generous offer of Bloom gives you an opportunity to really know how good is this popular Pompeian product. For 20c you get 1/3 of a 60c box of Pompeian Bloom, valuable samples of Pompeian Day Cream (protecting), Night Cream (cleansing), Beauty Powder, Madame Jeannette's beauty booklet, and the famous 1926 Pompeian Panel entitled "Moments That Will Treasured Be, in the Mint of Memory." This panel was executed by a famous artist, and is reproduced in full color. Art store value 75c to \$1.00.

Tear off, sign, and send

Madame Jeannette,
THE POMPEIAN LABORATORIES
2809 Payne Ave., Cleveland, Ohio.

I enclose 2 dimes (20c) for 1926 Panel, 1/3 of 60c box of Bloom, Beauty Booklet and other samples.

Name
Street
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Shade of rouge wanted
This coupon void after Nov. 1, 1926.





VIOLET HEMING
in "Chivalry"

Photograph by Murray Studios, New York





NORMA TALMADGE
Film Star

Photograph by Melbourne Spurr, Hollywood



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Film Star

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FLORENCE GILBERT
Film Star

Photograph by Witzel Studio, Los Angeles



DOROTHY SEASTROM
Film Star





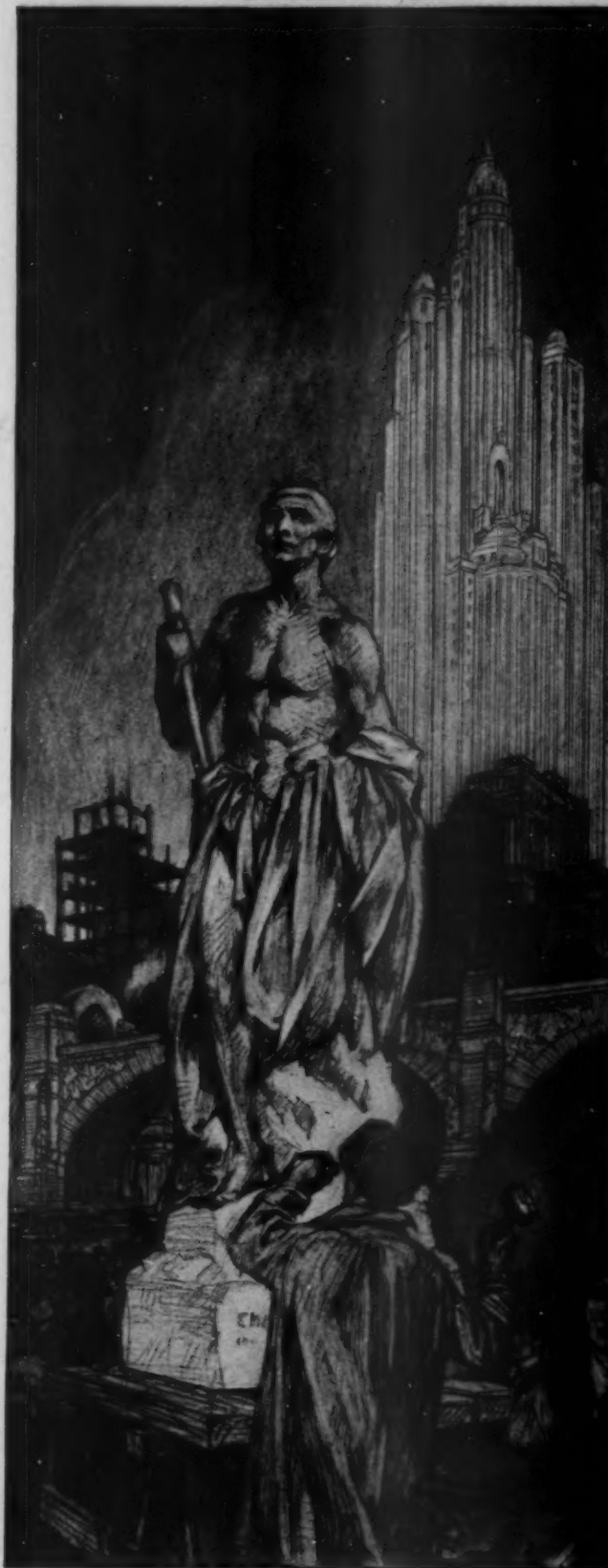
Body by Fisher. Three words that stand for the ultimate in fine and lasting body construction, in purity of design, in beauty and service of all interior trimmings. The simple phrase Body by Fisher carries a world of meaning in motor car satisfaction

FISHER BODIES



"ME"

By Angelo Patri
 Decoration by Franklin Booth



THE pipe leaked, and a stream of water wandered down the hall precisely where it would do the most harm. In haste and alarm we called for the plumber, and he came. He had such gusto for his job, that plumber lad! He hammered and soldered and smoothed with the delicate accurate touch of a surgeon, and when he had done, he bestrode his work and cocked a knowing eye at the head of the house: "You must be some particular about your jobs. When you called, they sent *me*." Louis Fourteenth could not have put more self-appreciation into that "*me*."

Why not? The notion that art and beauty are qualities that dwell in a realm where Saturday night may never intrude is, to my way of thinking, quite wrong. There can be, and often is, as much of art in wiping a joint or closing a deal as the artist puts into his picture or his statue.

Every time you go down street you elbow greater beauty and more of it than you will find in a weary afternoon in a museum. The colors on the fruit-stand fill your heart with delight. The shop-windows are hoards of beauty.

On clear evenings as the Staten Island ferry-boat wallows across the bay, a little group of people gather on her deck, drinking in the loveliness of the towers and spires and noble walls of the city's skyscrapers. Bathed in light that ripples and darts from sea to sky, they reveal a glimpse of the spirit of toiling men and women who write *me* on the daily job.

We greatly honor those who create beauty in the studio. Why not those who create it red-hot in the shop or the office, all in the work of the day? The iron-worker setting his girder, the reporter writing his story between leaps, the house-mother laying her table, all of us who work, have a share in the prideful *me*.

There is no fun in working if there is no room for the signature of the worker. We crave this one thing of life: that in days to come some one will stop long enough to say: "See, he did this perfect thing. Here is his *me* upon it."

By right of authority we possess this privilege, for did not the Creator stand back from His labor, when it was finished, and pronounce it good?

Franklin Booth

As the World Looks

by Edgar A. Guest

Decoration by Arthur E. Becher

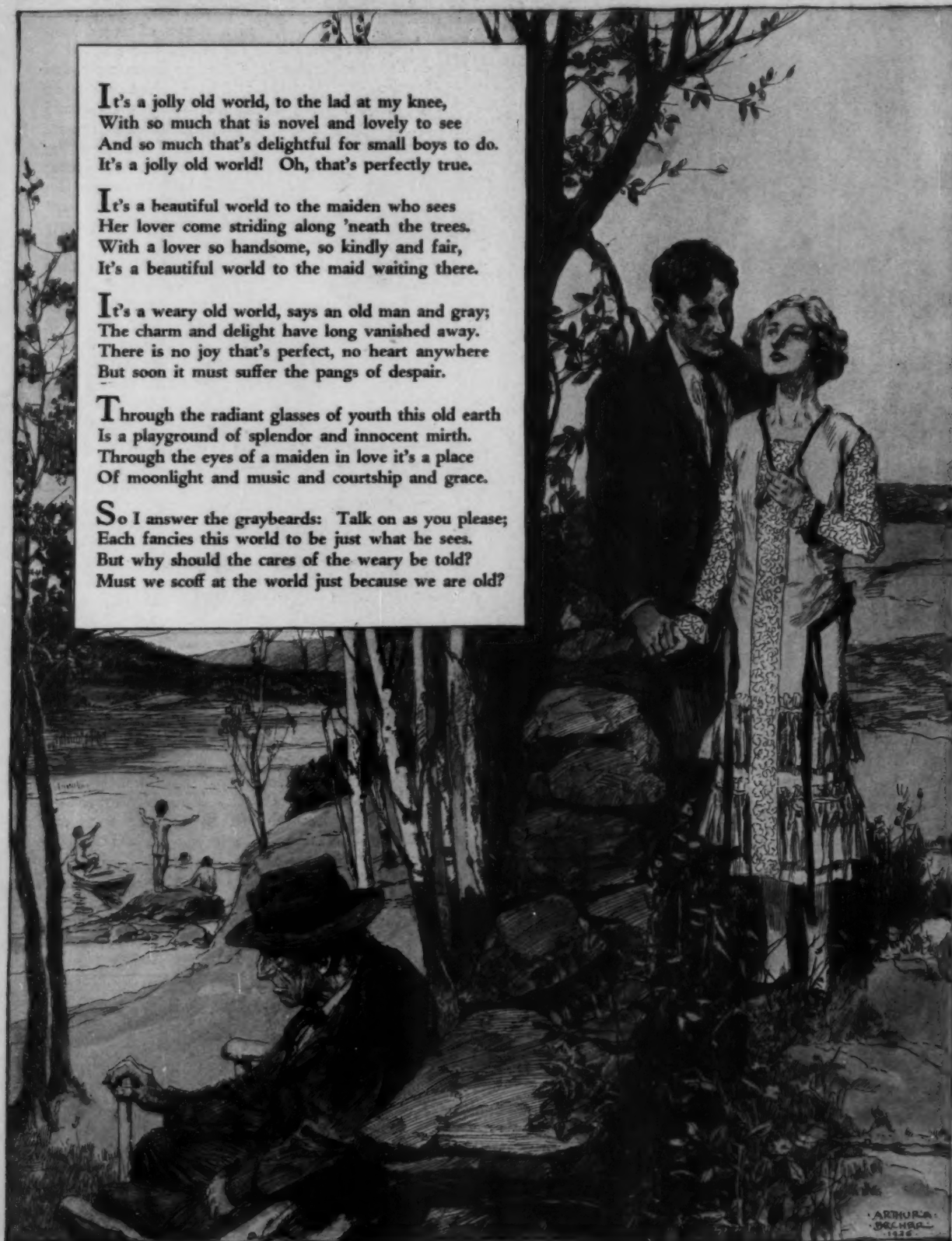
It's a jolly old world, to the lad at my knee,
With so much that is novel and lovely to see
And so much that's delightful for small boys to do.
It's a jolly old world! Oh, that's perfectly true.

It's a beautiful world to the maiden who sees
Her lover come striding along 'neath the trees.
With a lover so handsome, so kindly and fair,
It's a beautiful world to the maid waiting there.

It's a weary old world, says an old man and gray;
The charm and delight have long vanished away.
There is no joy that's perfect, no heart anywhere
But soon it must suffer the pangs of despair.

Through the radiant glasses of youth this old earth
Is a playground of splendor and innocent mirth.
Through the eyes of a maiden in love it's a place
Of moonlight and music and courtship and grace.

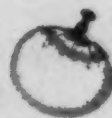
So I answer the graybeards: Talk on as you please;
Each fancies this world to be just what he sees.
But why should the cares of the weary be told?
Must we scoff at the world just because we are old?



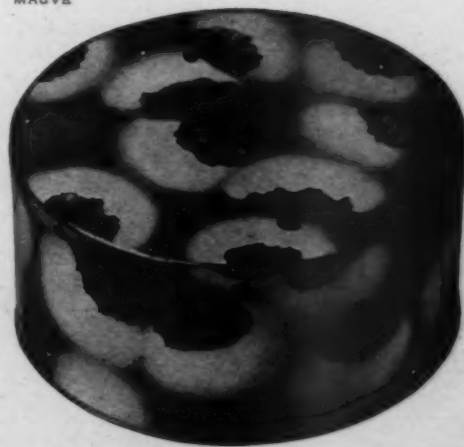


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The intangible atmosphere of loveliness that speaks of things half dreamed of — it is the glamour with which charming women surround themselves. COTY Face Powders give perceptible beauty to the complexion, and with their perfume touch it with haunting memorable fragrance.



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A new booklet of Coty creations
interesting to all women — on request

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Men Are Quitting

by the millions old-type shaving preparations for this unique creation. Accept, please, a 10-day tube to try

GENTLEMEN: Five years ago Palmolive Shaving Cream was unknown. Today it is leader in its field.

It is a unique creation. It differs immeasurably from any shaving soap you have ever tried. Eighty per cent of its users once were wedded to rival makes of shaving soaps.

It is based on the four requirements 1000 men named as their ideals of a shaving cream, plus a fifth . . . strong bubbles . . . which we ourselves added.

We think you will like it. Sixty years of soap study stand behind it. The same careful study that made Palmolive Soap the leading toilet soap of the world.

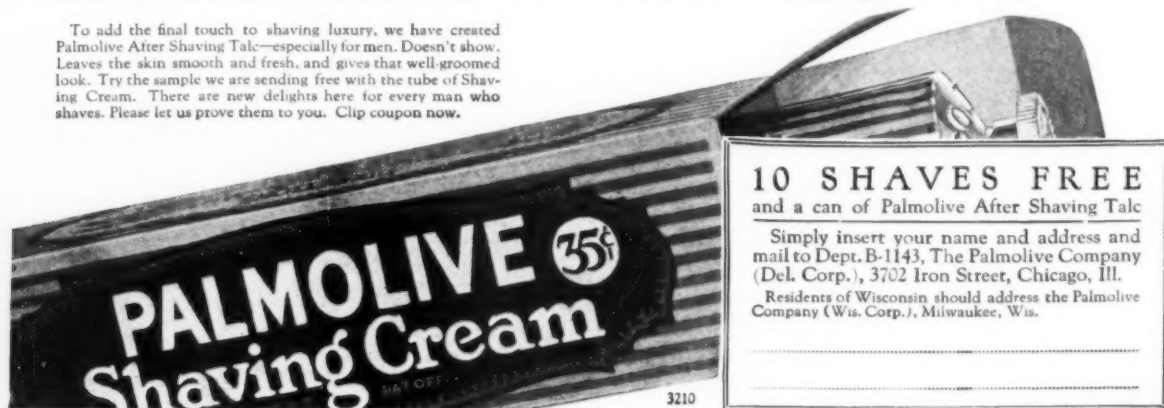
To add the final touch to shaving luxury, we have created Palmolive After Shaving Talc—especially for men. Doesn't show. Leaves the skin smooth and fresh, and gives that well-groomed look. Try the sample we are sending free with the tube of Shaving Cream. There are new delights here for every man who shaves. Please let us prove them to you. Clip coupon now.

May we ask you, then, the courtesy of trying it, both in your interest and in ours?

These 5 Advantages

- 1—Multiplies itself in lather 250 times.
- 2—Softens the beard in one minute.
- 3—Maintains its creamy fullness for 10 minutes on the face.
- 4—Strong bubbles hold the hairs erect for cutting.
- 5—Fine after effects due to palm and olive oil content.

We think we have done a great job. You may agree, or you may not. But in fairness to us both, please give it a fair trial. Send the coupon. Do this today.



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and a can of Palmolive After Shaving Talc

Simply insert your name and address and mail to Dept. B-1143, The Palmolive Company (Del. Corp.), 3702 Iron Street, Chicago, Ill.

Residents of Wisconsin should address the Palmolive Company (Wis. Corp.), Milwaukee, Wis.

A COMMON-SENSE EDITORIAL

By BRUCE BARTON

Ten More Years of Life

NOT long ago the newspapers reported a curious case in Kansas City. A defaulting banker, who had ruined his own life and the estates of many others, was locked up in jail. Whereupon he proceeded, in the words of the report, to "think himself to death."

He had no organic disease. But, deliberately casting aside all desire to live and fixing his thoughts upon death, he compelled his own mind to destroy him.

The late Thomas R. Marshall in his autobiography hints of some similar tragedy in the career of Senator Ollie James. He says: "The death of James, in the full flush of his manhood and in the splendor of his intellectual attainments, was especially distressing, if I am correctly informed, because he suffered from no actual disease. He really died, as I was told, from mental suggestion."

Of all the realms of knowledge, that which the mind has explored the least is the mind itself. What does courage do to our health? How far can love lift us out of our limitations? What effect have anger and envy on our arteries? How much of the difference between a one-horse-power man and a hundred-horse-power man is faith?

Having no scientific training, I can ask these questions without being able to answer them. But I look at folks as I go along, and recently I saw an interesting contrast.

There were two brothers, one rich and the other a poor physician attached to a social settlement. The rich brother carried more kinds of insurance than any man I have ever

known. If care and continuous self-protection can extend our years, he should have lived to be ninety at least. But he died at fifty-three.

The poor brother had little enough chance to think of himself. Night and day he was at the beck and call of every sort of affliction. He got his feet soaking in the winter rains. His sleep was broken by calls in the night. His meals were snatched on the run.

At the age of sixty he grew very tired and went to a sanitarium for a three-weeks rest. They said to him: "You have the arteries of a man of ninety. You are likely to drop dead at any minute."

Whether he ever gave that verdict any thought I do not know. He was a very religious man, and his idea was that he was doing the work of Another and would be called away from it whenever the work was done.

He died at the age of seventy-five. I attended his funeral, and this is the thought that was in my mind: Suppose, when those specialists warned him, he had stopped his work and begun to take care of himself, to "think about himself," wouldn't he probably have died as his brother died before him?

Not being a scientist, I cannot tell. But when the laws of the mind are finally discovered and charted, I suspect that one of them will be this: if you do most of your thinking about other people, the chances are that you will have ten more good years of life.



In **C**HICAGO, as in NEW YORK,
salespeople in the finest stores say:
 "Protect delicate garments this way"

Have you ever shopped in Chicago? In the little jewel-boxes of shops along the lake-front? Or in the magnificent department stores standing so closely within the famous Loop?

Nowhere—even in New York—will you find a more bewildering array of lovely garments—silks and woolens so fragile, so delicate that you wonder breathlessly whether they ever could be *washed*!

But they *can*! The careful, intelligent people who sell them didn't hesitate a minute when a young woman asked them recently about laundering. "Yes," was their reply, "wash them with Ivory."

Just as in New York's greatest stores when the same question was put, Ivory was specified oftener than all other soaps together. Opinions differed about the safety of other soaps mentioned now and then; but about Ivory there was only one opinion: "It is pure and mild and safe enough for anything that pure water alone will not harm."

TYPICAL COMMENTS
from different stores

"I know this blouse will launder because a customer of mine washed one very successfully. *But be sure to*



use only lukewarm water and Ivory Flakes. Our department head has told us to advise Ivory."—BLOUSE DEPARTMENT.

"We will guarantee this piece of sports silk. But you must use reasonable care in laundering. *And by reasonable care, I mean Ivory Soap.* For all fine silks use Ivory and you will save yourself a great deal of trouble."—SILK DEPARTMENT.

"Sometimes customers come in with complaints about streaking and fading and we discover that they have used too strong soaps. *So to be safe, we have been instructed always to recommend Ivory.*"—HOSIERY DEPARTMENT.

These recommendations, of course, are borne out by your own experience with Ivory. For naturally, a soap that is pure and mild enough to use on your face and on a baby's delicate skin is safe for your finest garments.

For your convenience there are two forms of Ivory—the cake of Ivory and the Flakes. Ivory Flakes are a delight to use—so thin, so light, converted so magically by hot water into fluffy, mounting Ivory suds.

FREE!

May we send you our helpful little booklet on "*The Care of Lovely Garments*"? Simply address Section 28-EF, Department of Home Economics, Procter & Gamble, Cincinnati, Ohio, and you will receive a copy free, with a sample of Ivory Flakes, too.

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Safe for your skin—

Safe for fine fabrics



IVORY SOAP
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The RED BOOK Magazine

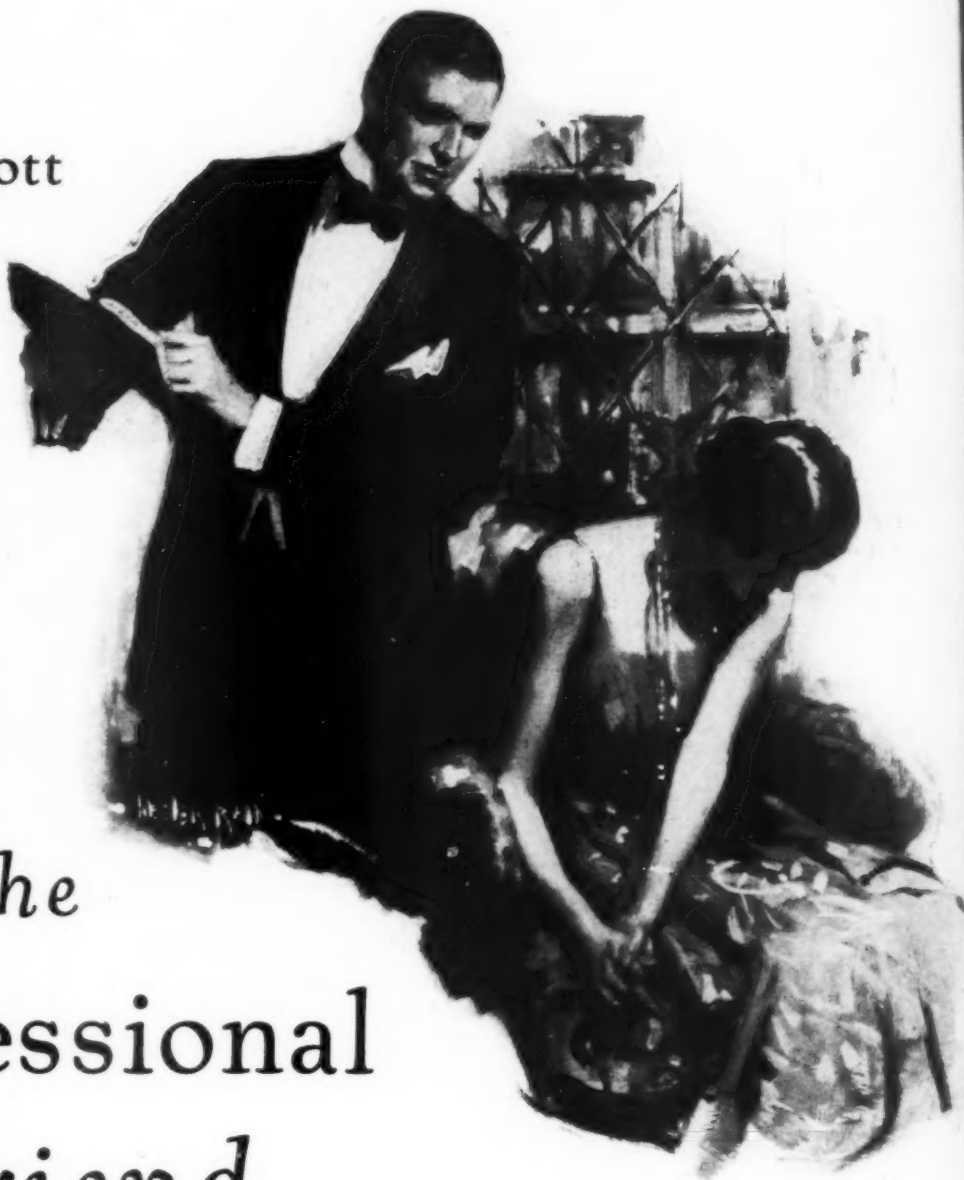
May 1926 • Volume XLVII • Number 1

KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN, *Editor*

EDGAR SISSON, *Associate Editor*

By
Leroy Scott

There's nothing in the world Mr. Scott would rather do than go out on a case with a detective. He's done it scores of times; he knows the technique of crime-detection, and that is why his stories about it "read real." Thus here he fictionizes a case that in a measure came under his own observation not long ago.



The Professional Friend

Illustrated by Lester Ralph

"His greatest joy was to force me to listen while he read the diary's worst passages."

IT seemed to Clifford that if ever a voice had carried panic and urgent need over a telephone-wire, that voice was Mrs. Fosdick's when she had begged for this appointment. Now that she was seated in his office, he read that same panic and urgent need in her pallid face. It was a professional instinct with Clifford to make instant estimates of those with whom he dealt, and even before she had broached her mission, his sympathy was all on the side of this young woman whose lovely face had so often gazed into the romance-hungry faces of all New York from the front pages of the newspapers.

"Oh, Mr. Clifford, I am in the very greatest trouble!" she gasped, her control all gone with her first words. "The very worst trouble imaginable! I have asked you to see me because

I believe that only a very able detective can help me out! And oh, if you will only try to help me after you hear—"

"Please, one minute, Mrs. Fosdick," Clifford politely but firmly interrupted. And then he proceeded to deliver the little set speech which experience had taught him it was wisdom to make to a new client at the very outset; but his main purpose now in delivering his speech was to give Mrs. Fosdick's shattered faculties time in which to reassemble themselves.

"Yes, I am a detective, Mrs. Fosdick, and I hope a good detective. But before you confide your trouble to me, I'm going to ask you to listen to a few words about myself. I may not be at all the kind of detective you require. If I am not, my words will save your sharing your precious and perhaps danger-

ous confidence with an unnecessary person. I am a specialist, Mrs. Fosdick. I am not particularly interested in running down big criminals, or solving the mysteries of big crimes, or gaining private information for clients. I leave such work to others. I am much more interested in the problems life entangles people in—in trying to help people out of the big troubles their own mistakes or the acts of others, or apparently blind and malicious circumstances, have plunged them into, and out of which their frantic despair sees no way. Human problems and their solution: that's my specialty, and I don't handle many cases outside my own field. I'm really more of a trouble-doctor than a detective. Perhaps I might more properly term myself a professional friend."

His speech had served its purpose of restoring her control. "A professional friend! What a wonderful idea!"

"Perhaps," he smiled, "I shall some day use that on my cards—'Professional Friend.'"

"What a wonderful idea!" she repeated eagerly. "Oh, but I understand! It's human nature to want to take our troubles to our friends, but usually our friends can do no more than just listen and sympathize. But a professional friend—a wise, experienced person to whom you can tell your troubles with the certainty that they'll somehow be solved and your secret kept—how amazingly better!"

She paused a moment, then added: "It's because I was told that you were this kind of a detective that I am here. Perhaps I should have said at the very start that my lawyer, Judge Meredith, advised me to come to you."

"Judge Meredith has been extremely kind to me."

"Judge Meredith has told me a very great deal about you. May I make a little confession?" A faint smile of amusement lighted her wan beauty. "Judge Meredith has told me so much about the things you have done—he says you are the best detective ever turned out by the New York Police Department—that when you first came in, I was astonished to find you so young a man. My mind had formed a picture of a man quite elderly. Pardon my being personal, but you look hardly more than thirty-five."

"Perhaps the years have been kind to me as well as Judge Meredith." His smile subsided. "And now if you feel like telling me your story, Mrs. Fosdick, I'm ready to hear it."

Immediately the shadow of tragedy was again upon her face.

"Perhaps you may have heard that I have just become engaged to Mr. Ross McKane?"

"I read the announcement a few days ago." And then because it was always Clifford's practice to help along a distressed client to whom speech was difficult, he added: "If I remember the newspapers correctly, Mr. McKane is a very old admirer of yours. He knew you even before Mr. Fosdick, but Mr. Fosdick won out, and Mr. McKane was best man at your wedding. Mr. McKane has spent the last two or three years in China looking after his railroad interests there, and returned some four months ago. The engagement was spoken of as the culmination of a childhood romance."

"All that is true. Ross and I are both—both very much in love. Mr. Clifford, do you chance to remember anything about my marriage? About six years ago—I was then nineteen. Pardon me if I seem to be going back to old, unnecessary things, but everything I have to tell you is based upon the long ago."

Clifford nodded reminiscently.

"I remember your marriage most distinctly. Your marriage, your entire story, are so recent that everyone remembers them; and besides, since you telephoned, I have gone through the newspaper accounts of your career. Your wedding was the greatest of its season. The papers referred to you and Mr. Fosdick as the handsomest pair that had stood before an altar for years. You two were spoken of as the perfect lovers, the marriage as the perfect romance."

"Yes, that's just what the papers said, what everybody said. Certainly my husband was handsome. And certainly he was the perfect figure of the perfect lover. If he had his little failings, they were not so much his fault as the inevitable consequence of his being so handsome, of his so filling the eyes of women with his natural graces as the ideal lover. If women would insist on being fools over him, why blame him? That was the public attitude toward him during his life and after his death. Do you remember?"

"I remember. A delightful chap, admired by all his men friends, and admired too much by women. A thing to be understood as human, if not wholly forgiven, in such a man."

"Exactly. The ideal figure of the romantic lover. And now



I come to the death of my husband three years ago. Do you recall it, and the public impression it made?"

"Yes. His death was due to heart disease, his doctor certified. He had always had a weak heart. You were alone with him in your library when he died. The newspapers made a great story of this tragic ending, after only two or three years of marriage, of one of the city's most brilliant romances, and they gave unlimited sympathy to the young widow."

"Yes. You now have a complete outline of the romance of my husband and myself—that is to say, as the world knew that romance."

She suddenly leaned far toward Clifford, gripped in a tenseness compared to which her greatest tenseness of before was relaxation. Her next words were a bare whisper.

"Here is my trouble, Mr. Clifford: I am in danger of being arrested and tried for my husband's murder."

"What!" cried the astounded Clifford. "On whose charge? On whose evidence?"

"On my husband's."

"Your husband? After he's been dead for three years? I don't understand!"

"To understand, you must understand my husband. Almost nothing of the popular story of my brilliant marriage-romance is truth, and least of all was my husband like his popular picture. The exact opposite, Mr. Clifford, is the true picture. I hardly know how to express Hal Fosdick to you and make him seem credible. I have read that Cesare Borgia was the most handsome, most graceful, most polished, most gorgeous gentleman of the Middle Ages—and was the Middle Ages' greatest villain. My thoughts have linked together these two men of magnificent manners. I think of my husband, despite the splendid family he came from, as the Cesare Borgia of the present day, but never so open and direct in his evil as the other."

"I think my husband never had the least love for me. I think that only his pride, and his dominating instinct for conquest over women, were ever involved. He married me, so I now believe, primarily to defeat Ross McKane. As for me, I was nineteen and was fascinated by his outer personality, just as I might have been fascinated by Cesare Borgia. Compared to him, Ross McKane seemed very pale."

"I could give you endless details of his evil nature, but that would be useless here. Almost from the very day of our marriage he kept up his affairs with other women. When I finally



One of the men halted him in the dance, urging him to leave. But Fosdick balked.

learned of this, and gained enough courage to protest, he smilingly met me with the most diabolical thing of which I had ever heard. If I wanted to make trouble or talk, he told me, he could make far worse trouble and far worse talk.

"Mr. Clifford, here was his diabolical plan: He started a diary. That diary was almost entirely about me, and was filled with the most terrible discoveries he had made about me—all invented, but all set down with most convincing detail and all written in the convincing tone in which a man would set down the secret, shameful things of his life.

"For my present purpose I'm going to speak of only two specific items in that little black book. He set down in his diary that, since our marriage, he had discovered me in infidelities with two men, giving their names, and that I had confessed to him, and that the two men had also confessed to him. These were men who had been friends of mine, but he had cleverly chosen men who had recently died, and therefore could never help me with their denial. The second item was in the nature of a warning. He set down that he had charged me with my various misconducts; he wrote that I had threatened to kill him if he ever made those accusations public, and he wrote that he was living in constant terror of his life; and he directed that in the event of his death, even if he had to be exhumed, there should be an autopsy upon his body on the suspicion that I had poisoned him. If I started the least trouble, he said, he was going to turn this diary over to his lawyer to be used in his defense and for my destruction.

"Perhaps while he was alive that diary actually could not have been used against me. But I believed that it could; remember, I was hardly more than a girl. I lived in constant fear and horror of that little black book, and of course was terrified into abject silence. His greatest joy was to corner me in some situation from which I could not escape, and force me to listen while he read the diary's worst passages. He always did take pleasure in torturing people he felt were in his power.

"Here is another fact about my husband: he was a secret drug-addict. Perhaps no one knew this but myself. I do not know what he took, but his daily dosage was enormous.

"Then came the night of his death. We were in the library. To prevent my ever getting the diary, he kept it in a little wall-safe. On this night he unlocked the safe, took out the book and was tormenting me by reading some of its most infamous paragraphs, when he dropped dead. Of course I was frantic. I wanted to destroy the diary, but I did not dare try it at this time, so I thrust the book back into the safe and locked the door. Then I called for help.

"My brother-in-law, Steve Fosdick, happened to be in the house on that night, and he took charge of the funeral. Right after the funeral I sent for a safe expert. I was going to get the diary and burn it. The man opened the safe, Mr. Clifford, and—and the diary was gone! Mr. Clifford, that terrible diary was gone!"

Clifford nodded. "I see your situation, Mrs. Fosdick. Was anything else missing?"

The paper leaped into flames. Bradley's pistol maintained its menace until the flames were gone.

"Not to my knowledge. But of course I do not know exactly what my husband kept in the safe."

"Then the theft was committed to get the book. That would argue that some other person knew of the book's existence. Was there such another person?"

"I do not know. Of course, my husband might have told, and might even have told where he kept it."

"Just so. Then when the book did not appear in connection with your husband's death, this person realized its great possible future value and decided to steal it. To any good cracksman, these little wall-safes are as easy to open as a child's bank. If I remember correctly, your own fortune is very moderate. But you were young, attractive; so it seemed a far more promising speculation to hold the book a few years for a better market."

"Oh, the suffering of these years! The fear that that book would turn up!"

"The announcement of your engagement a few days ago to Mr. McKane created that better market. Mr. McKane is a rich man. How much is the person asking for the book, Mrs. Fosdick?"

"One hundred thousand dollars! Here is the letter which came today, inclosing a page of the diary. The page is not one of those containing the really bad passages."

Clifford took the two sheets. The letter demanding money was not anonymous as such letters usually are, was not on cheap paper, was not in a disguised hand. Instead, it was on the finest of engraved office paper, was neatly typed, and carried a bold signature. It read:

"Dear Madam:

"I am acting in behalf of a client, who has a manuscript book which he believes to be of especial interest to you. In that belief he is giving you for a period of ten days the first refusal of the volume. As proof of the authenticity and value of the book I am inclosing a sample page my client gave me for the purpose. My client's price is \$100,000.

"If you do not choose to buy within the ten days, my client expects to ignore the financial value of the volume to himself and present it to the Chief of Police for the archives of the Police Department.

"Very respectfully,

"Peter Bradley."

At the sight of the name of Bradley, it was as if Clifford's very brain exploded. Bradley! Bradley again! For several moments speech was beyond him. Then he rallied his faculties.

"This alleged sheet from the diary, Mrs. Fosdick—is that genuine?"

"Yes. I remember it well."

"Then undoubtedly this man Bradley has the real diary in his possession. Mrs. Fosdick,"—Clifford could not keep a certain grimness out of his voice,—"*do you know who this man Bradley is?*"

"Judge Meredith told me he was once head of the New York Detective Bureau."

"Bradley was the ablest chief of detectives the New York Police Department ever had. And in wide experience and sheer ability, I think he was the greatest detective in the world. Take the greatest detective in the world, let him get a crooked and cynical slant, and he inevitably becomes the greatest crook in the world. That's just who and what Bradley is."

"Are—are you sure, Mr. Clifford?" she breathed.

"I know, Mrs. Fosdick. He was my chief when I was in the Detective Bureau; he taught me a large part of what I know. In those days he was my idol; for years the two of us were the



greatest friends. Then he went crooked, and for years we've been the greatest enemies. During these years I've always been trying to land him; several times I thought I had him, but at the last moment he's always been able to play a hidden trump. He still runs a private detective agency, but that is chiefly a blind for his other operations. I'm telling you all this because we must both realize the full seriousness of your situation."

"It—it seems so much more terrible than I had dreamed!" she exclaimed.

"We could not be facing a more subtle, resourceful and dangerous man. And now, Mrs. Fosdick, specifically what do you wish me to do?"

"Get back that book! Don't you see that if it were given to the police, my husband's body would be exhumed, enough of some drug would be found in him to have killed half a dozen normal men, I'd be put on trial for his murder, the accusation in that book would be used against me, and I'd have no defense except the unsupported words of my denial—and even if acquitted, my name would be blackened for life by the charges in those pages! And—and—it would end things between Ross McKane and me! I couldn't marry any man with such terrible accusations against me! I must have back that book!"

"On the basis of paying for it?"

"I have no such sum to pay! And I could not ask Ross McKane for such an amount without telling him exactly what it was for, and that of course I could never tell him. I'd always



feel that perhaps some trick had been played. I'd always live in fear."

"I think all those fears are a tribute to your good sense, Mrs. Fosdick. The chances are, with a man like Bradley back of this, that the book has been reproduced—that there are photographic prints, and plates or films. If you paid for the book, you'd be called on to pay again later, and you'd never get through paying. Those prints and films are just as dangerous as the book itself, and are an even more difficult problem."

Clifford considered for a long moment. "To be cleared of this situation is your great concern. You should not be concerned about methods. If I undertake to clear you, are you willing to trust me absolutely as to the methods of bringing that end about?"

"If you'll only let me trust you! And oh, Mr. Clifford, if you can do that—I'll thank you forever—I'll thank you—"

Her eyes were streaming. She could say no more.

"Then I'll do my best, Mrs. Fosdick." Clifford had rarely been so moved by a client as by this lovely young woman, designed for happiness and denied happiness, and at last with happiness so near, and yet so drearily menaced. He impulsively took her hand and pressed it, and his heart said more than his brain might have said:

"I don't mean to promise too much, but hold fast to your hope—and I'm hoping that some day soon you may be sending me an invitation to your wedding!"

BACK in his office Clifford gave his mind to a scrutiny of the situation. Bradley was obviously the dominant figure of the conspiracy; he admitted that he possessed the book or could produce it. Thus the problem of the case was resolved to the very simple one of getting from Bradley the diary and its suspected reproduction.

Simple, yes—but it seemed to Clifford that he had never attacked a problem more difficult. A hundred thousand dollars might buy the diary, but how about the prints and film?

Naturally, one of the first possible solutions that came to his mind was, since the diary had been stolen, why not steal the diary back? But before it could be re-stolen it had to be located. It might be in any one of millions of safe-deposit boxes or private safes in New York; it might be hidden in some other city. Who had been the original thief?

Pondering the problem, Clifford was convinced that Bradley's brains had been behind the affair from the start. Bradley had done the planning and had hired a cracksman to do the actual work. That he had known the dead man was almost certain: Hal Fosdick had loved the gay life along Broadway, and Bradley was one of that life's most notable figures. It seemed certain that Fosdick, perhaps when in liquor, had told Bradley of the little book; and when the book had not promptly appeared after Fosdick's death, Bradley had seen its potential value and had acted accordingly.

This supposition at least explained (Continued on page 128)

Two Flights up

By Mary Roberts Rinehart

THIS latest of Mrs. Rinehart's novels is not only fascinating by reason of its intriguing story and its eminently human people, but for its revealing picture of certain strata of Washington society. The distinguished author of "Bab," "The Amazing Interlude" and many another well-loved story is at her best here.

The Story So Far:

WHAT was the substance behind the shadow of catastrophe that indubitably hung over that strange Washington household? To Howard Warrington, a bond-salesman newly domiciled therein as a paying guest, understanding came step by amazing step.

First he learned that there was no Hilda—that the maid-servant to whom Mrs. Bayne so often and elegantly referred was a myth, and that the housework was done by her sister Margaret and her daughter Holly. Well, that was a fiction common enough, of course. But when late one night Warrington smelled gas, traced it to the source, came to the locked door of the kitchen, broke in and found Aunt Margaret neatly lain down to die on the floor with all the burners of the stove turned on—that was nothing to smile over.

Aunt Margaret recovered—and rather surprisingly she soon thereafter married an old and persistent suitor, one James Cox, the trusted employee of a downtown department store. Yet Warrington's rescue of Aunt Margaret did little to break down the reserve the Baynes maintained toward him; and he could only rage inwardly when wealthy, prim and fashionable Furness Brooks came to call. More and more often Warrington, passing the drawing-room door on his way upstairs, saw Brooks there with Holly, and heard Mrs. Bayne at her so-genteel tea-table, making her eternal allusions to the apocryphal Hilda.

He raged inwardly, yes, until the engagement was announced. And then he burst out in protest, for how could Holly, dear delightful Holly, possibly care for such a—

"Marry your popinjay!" he stormed at her. "Go on mincing through life. Drink your tea and hold your little finger out! I'm through."

Suddenly he saw the engagement ring on her left hand, and he lifted it and looked at it. From the ring he looked at her hand; it was small and shapely, but it bore the scars of "Hilda's" work.

"You poor little fool," he said gently, and kissed it.

It was soon thereafter that Mrs. Bayne came to Warrington with a bond and asked him to turn it into cash for her—she knew little of such things. He realized of course that the money would go to buy the clothes and the little intimate things with which Holly would go to her husband; yet he could only acquiesce. What he did not know at this time, though nearly everyone else in town knew it, was that Tom Bayne, Holly's father, was in the penitentiary, whither he had been sent after stealing a large amount in securities from the bank of which he had been cashier. Mrs. Bayne and Holly knew, moreover, that he was soon to be released. *(The story continues in detail.)*

WARRINGTON sold the bond next day and brought the money back. It was a coupon bond, and it went out with an odd lot from the office. Save for a sense of responsibility as to the safe-carriage of the currency in his pocket,—Mrs. Bayne had asked for currency,—the transaction was ended, so far as he was concerned.

He took the money back that night, buttoned inside his coat against pickpockets, and he walked part of the way. He had found that walking until he was dog tired was the only way he could sleep, just then.

Furness Brooks' car was at the curb as usual, and so Warrington passed the open drawing-room door without a glance. He had a dread of seeing Holly and her lover together, of having their new intimacy thrust at him by some glance or gesture. But as a matter of fact, there was hardly a chance of that. It was, by and large, a strange wooing. . . .

"Come over and sit by me, Holly, wont you?"

"I can talk better here."

If Furness insisted, she would go reluctantly, and the hand he held was often cold as ice. But she was gentleness and acquiescence itself to him, as if she would make up in this way for her failure in the other.

Fortunately Furness liked to talk. He was already planning for the wedding, seeing in it that one moment when he would hold the center of the stage, and not be "filling in." He and Holly. He was determined that the wedding should be correct in every detail.

"It's a pity Sam Parker's thinking of going abroad. He's the logical person to give you away."

There were times, of course, when his passion got the better of his common sense, when his wooing became instead a sort of fierce gesture of possession. Once, carried away by it, he went too far with her, and she struck him with her closed fist and slammed out of the room. But he knew he had been wrong, and he left her no loophole of escape. He apologized by note that night and flowers the next morning, and she had to come back to him, a trifle wary perhaps, but still his. . . .

Warrington of course had no idea of this. He was still seeing the household through an occasional peephole: tramping up the stairs past Mrs. Bayne's room, where if her door was open he could see her busy now with endless memoranda, past Holly's little chamber, with its tidy virginal white bed and its blue curtains—he always tried very hard not to glance into that room—and so on to his own lonely quarters, where a pair of military brushes on the dresser, and the books on a table, were all that marked it his.

So that night he went up the stairs, and Mrs. Bayne, hearing the creak of the loose step outside, followed him up.

He gave her the money. He had an idea that it was more money than she had held in her hands for many years, but she was as calm as a May morning.

"By the way," he said, "I hope you don't keep things like that lying around the house. They're negotiable, you know."

"Just what do you mean?"

"Bonds like that are much the same as currency. They can be stolen and sold."

Afterward he was to remember that she made an odd little startled gesture, but she said nothing for a moment. Then:

Illustrated by

John Alonzo Williams



"The bond," she said.
"It must have come
from here. She had
no bonds."

"I see," she said quietly. "Thank you for telling me." She moved to the door and paused there irresolutely.

"I'll be very careful," she said, and added irrelevantly, her eyes on the package of currency in her hand: "There are certain sacrifices one must make at times like this. I dare say you know that my daughter is to be married?"

"I saw it in the paper. Yes."

"She is marrying very well," she said, still in that curious irresolute manner. "Very well indeed."

Suddenly all his resentment and anger flared up in him. He could hardly control his voice.

"That depends, of course, on how you look at it."

"I don't understand you."

"If she cares for the man, and not for what he will bring her."

Their eyes met, and there was certainly no friendliness in them. Mrs. Bayne drew herself up.

"That, of course, is not a matter for discussion," she said quietly, and went out of the room.

That she bore him no lasting grudge, however, he saw the next evening. He found her when he came home, drinking her tea as usual, with her hat awry on her head and a litter of parcels and boxes in the hall. She was clearly excited, and more expansive than he had ever seen her.

"Do come in," she said. "Holly, a cup for Mr. Warrington. Don't bother to ring. By the way, darling, I stopped in at

your Aunt Margaret's. She'll be delighted to do what I suggested."

But Holly was already out of the room.

Mrs. Bayne waved a hand toward the hall. "What a day I've had! But the prices of things since the war! I have done so little buying that I didn't realize."

Her eyes glittered; her hands trembled. There was almost ecstasy in her voice. He saw that she had not so much forgiven the evening before as forgotten it, and to the unaccustomed luxury of being with Holly he surrendered for a moment his own anger and bitterness.

He even had a few moments alone with her, while Mrs. Bayne went upstairs to take off her hat, a few moments which led to a rather curious result.

"I've always wanted to tell you," he said in a low voice. "I don't know what got into me the other day. I hadn't a right in the world to say what I did."

"No," she said. "Of course, you didn't really know how things were. If you had, you would have understood better." "I wouldn't understand a loveless marriage, no matter how things were."

"How do you know it is a loveless marriage?"

"What did you mean by 'not letting her down' if it isn't?"

Instead of replying she went to the door and listened. Her mother was still upstairs. When she came back to the tea-table, her face was set.

"I'm going to ask you something," she said. "Something rather awful, but I must know. Has mother borrowed any money from you?"

"Certainly not. You can't get blood out of a stone! Anyhow, I am sure she would never think of such a thing."

"But she's got money somewhere."

"Hasn't she a little capital of her own? Maybe she has disposed of something."

"She has a small allowance. She can't draw on it in advance."

"She may have saved something."

"Saved!" said Holly scornfully. "You can't save out of nothing. Mr. Warrington, if you know anything, you must tell me. I can't tell you how important it is."

"But if she asked me not to?"

"What does that matter, if she's sold something that she shouldn't have sold? Oh, don't you see, if she has, she's done it for me, and I just can't bear it."



"I'm quite sure you are wrong. I'll tell you, since it's worrying you. She gave me a bond to sell. I got her a good price. And that's all."

"A bond!" she said. "She gave you a bond? My poor mother!"

Her face was stricken; she seemed to be holding to the tea-table for support. And then Mrs. Bayne came back.



"What is there to do? Of course
the church wedding's off."

Chapter Nine

EVEN then Warrington had no idea of the gravity of the situation. He helped them carry Mrs. Bayne's parcels up to her bedroom, and later on he could hear her opening them and talking, still in her new excited voice. She was still gloating happily as he went out again to his dinner, where the cashier at the Red Rose told him he looked glum, and hinted that the movies would cheer them both up a bit.

"There's a good show at the Grand," she said. "A laugh a minute."

"I wouldn't dare," he told her, smiling down at her. "I've got a cracked lip."

He ate his dinner morosely and thoughtfully, and then went back to the house. So Mrs. Bayne had had no business to sell

the bond! And in doing so she had added to Holly's worries, as if she had not enough already.

Worries! The word was too weak. *Sacrifices* was a better one; that was what she was doing, sacrificing herself, selling herself; and for what? To restore a little elderly gentlewoman to a world she had somehow lost! A silly world, full of vain imaginings and false values.

He succeeded finally in working himself to a very fair passion, so that sleep later on was out of the question. He got up, and in his dressing-gown and slippers sat in the chair by the hearth, a cigarette in his hand—and was wakened not long after by the odor of burning carpet.

He looked remorsefully at the charred spot on the floor, rubbed it with his finger but failed to erase it, and was about to try bed once more when he heard a faint sound overhead.

He stepped out into the upper hall and listened. There was a door to the attic staircase, a door which was always religiously kept closed. But now it was open, and a thin light trickled down, outlining the doorway in the surrounding darkness. A recollection of another night when he had stood there came to him, a night when Margaret had given up the battle between

family pride and happiness, and had laid herself down to rest on the cold linoleum in the kitchen.

It made his heart faint within him. There had been a sort of quiet despair in Holly's face that afternoon, as if at last she too had reached the end of the road.

He ran up the stairs and into the attic room.

There was a candle on the floor, and Holly was sitting beside it. She had drawn out an old trunk and lifted pieces of two of the ancient floor-boards, which had been beneath it, and over them she was staring at him with the strangest look he had ever seen on her face.

"Please go back," she said. "I'm quite all right."

"You don't look all right," he told her roughly. "And this place is cold. Do you want pneumonia?"

"I've asked you to go. If you don't, I'll have to, and I've got to stay."

"Don't be silly. If you're in some sort of trouble—"

"I'm in trouble enough, without you to make it worse. Please go. I've got to work this out alone."

"But if I only want to help? I give you my word of honor, that's all."

She sat looking up at him for a perceptible time before she made a despairing gesture of acquiescence.

"You'll find out anyhow," she said. "Look here."

But when he looked, he was in no way the wiser. He had, as has been said before, no background for Holly or the family, and he had never heard of Tom Bayne. All he saw was that beneath the lifted floor-boards a small suitcase was lying.

"I see. What about it?"

"The bond," she said. "It must have come from here. She had no bonds. It was when she came up to get the point lace. She must have moved the trunk."

He was still struggling to understand.

"You mean it didn't belong to her?"

"It belonged to the Harrison Bank," she said, and sat still, waiting for the heavens to fall.

When presently she realized that nothing fell but a silence, she looked up at him again.

"From the bank, don't you understand?"

But he still looked blank.

He had never heard of their trouble! It seemed incredible to her, who had thought all the world knew of it. But the mere telling of the facts seemed to ease her. And when he had finally gathered the essential facts, a difficult matter because she whispered them, as if to do so somehow minimized their import, he was more at a loss than he had ever been in his self-confident still young life. He saw that she was laying her burden on him with childlike faith, as if by sheer virtue of being a man he would know what to do.



He did the only thing he could think of. He picked up the candle and held out his hand.

"What are you going to do?"

"Get you out of here, for one thing."

"And leave that?"

"Why not? It's been here for years."

"But suppose she comes up again? Suppose she—"

"She's not likely to, before morning, is she? And she'll have to know sooner or later that it's been found."

"It isn't that." She swallowed, as if to moisten her dry throat. "She's taken one bond already, and you see—she needs it so dreadfully."

It was at that moment that he felt a cold chill travel slowly up his spine and settle in his brain. The part he himself had already played in the situation began to dawn on him. He had



"I don't believe it," said Margaret sharply. "Anyhow, I'm going up."

"Without dragging Mother in?"

"I've promised to keep her out, haven't I?"

She swayed a little as he helped her up. Still holding the candle, he lifted the suitcase; dust had penetrated the old floor-boards and covered it, and he shook that off. Then he replaced the boards and took a last look around him.

"Better go ahead," he told her. "I'll follow after you're safely down."

But she stood still, looking up at him.

"Why should you help us?" she said. "We are nothing to you."

"You are everything in the world to me," he said quietly, and watched her down the stairs.

Chapter Ten

MARGARET COX was very happy. She had even gained in flesh; every now and then James, her husband, put a penny in the slot of some weighing machine and stood by, eying the result proudly.

"A woman's the better for a little meat on her bones," he would tell her. "It shows somebody's looking after her."

And she no longer clenched her left hand for fear somebody would see her scarred forefinger. "Open it out," said lordly James. "It's only lazy hands that people have a right to be ashamed of. Only,"—and here his voice would soften,—"only, I wish the blisters were on mine and not on yours, my girl."

He always called her his girl, and in his eyes Margaret really was a girl; he had never quite got over his astonishment at the depths of her ignorance in some matters.

"Well, I'm darned," he would

sold a stolen bond, one of the carefully listed missing securities of a looted bank! Sooner or later—

He pulled himself together and smiled down at her gravely.

"What's your own idea?" he asked.

"They have to go back to the bank, of course. Only, Mother's got to be kept out of it. There must be some way."

"Of course there's a way," he told her.

But he was not so sure of it. One of the bonds had already been sold. It might escape identification indefinitely; on the other hand, it might already have been recognized, his residence in the Bayne house noted and a fatal connection established. In that case—

"See here," he said. "Suppose I take the suitcase down to my room overnight? Then in the morning I can see the bank people and arrange for everything to be done quietly?"

say. "Didn't they ever tell you anything at all?"

"They" in his mind were Margaret's family, and less immediately that *terra incognita* of aristocracy and repressions from which he had abducted her. "Certainly put one over on them," was his manner of referring to that abduction.

"There were a good many things we were taught not to discuss," she would say, coloring faintly. "It wasn't considered ladylike."

"Well, you can't be a real honest-to-John woman and be their kind of a lady at the same time," he would retort, and chuckle a bit.

Undoubtedly he was a vulgar little man, but he was honest, good-humored and sturdily independent. "I stand on my own feet," was one of his commonest expressions. Oddly enough, Margaret not only did not resent his (Continued on page 115)

By
**Thyra
 Samter
 Winslow**

Here's another of Thyra Winslow's vivid, penetrating interpretations of the life that's going on about us everywhere in America every day. And when it is revealed to us through the eyes of such an artist as Mrs. Winslow, we're a little ashamed that we've never appreciated its values ourselves. But that's perhaps the function of the artist—to make things clear.

Spring
 and the
B Beautiful
 Illustrated by
 Ralph Pallen Coleman
Blonde



"Sorry," said Celia.
 "I've got to hurry.
 They're going to
 have an important
 conference."

IT was spring in New York—a first faint beginning of spring. The trees were still stark, their branches brown and brittle, yet there were almost imperceptible signs of spring everywhere. A bit of green tracery and a bush magically filled overnight with golden blossoms in the park, tips of green on the spidery arms of last year's ivy, a pink cambric rose on a girl's spring hat, warm air with somehow a smell of perfume in it, windows open just a little, curtains beginning to fly out, a just-washed blue to the sky. The calendar had already passed March twenty-first, but New York's page had not turned over suddenly on that date to the chapter marked "Spring," now, however, spring was here. There was no mistaking it. Out in Elmwood, where Celia Morrison lived, spring had gained a bit on New York. At the station where the commuters caught the eight-fourteen there was an unmistakable haze of green over some of the bushes, little new shoots close to the ground, a splash of pink buds on a tulip tree. To be sure, the evergreens were as dusty and as lifeless a green as ever, and away from the station, where the landscape gardening disappeared, the outward signs of spring were less noticeable, but they were there, clear down to Newridge Avenue.

Celia Morrison lived on Newridge Avenue. The house was

Number 143 and was one of a group of thirty houses standing in an even, symmetrical row with tan stucco for the first story and alternately brown- or green-stained shingles for the second. Each house had a sun-porch in front, giving off a living-room with a fireplace, and with stairs going to the second floor; a dining-room joined the living-room with an ornamental arch; and a most modern white enameled kitchen brought up the rear. On the second floor each house had three bedrooms and a white-tiled bath. The houses all had neat white woodwork and light varnished hardwood floors. The furnishings differed, of course, for they followed the tastes of the individual owners, but the differences were not radical and were mostly between walnut or red mahogany tables in the living-rooms, the coverings of the overstuffed davenport or the colors of the shades of the floor-lamps, which were usually tan or rose.

The houses on Newridge Avenue and on the streets north, south, east and west of Newridge Avenue in a section sometimes called East Elmwood all followed the same scheme of architecture. The architect might even have had a name for this style of house. The other residents of Elmwood, living smugly, on the other side of the track, in houses individually imitating Early

English or Dutch Colonial, disliked the rows of houses, each just like its neighbor, but they never did anything definite about it.

The sign at the station advertising the houses in the east section of Elmwood told the exact price as well as the first cash payment necessary to secure a home, so each house-owner knew exactly what every other owner had paid. Back of each house stood a neat but seemingly too-small garage, though almost every garage actually did hold a car, which was more than you could say for the larger garages belonging to the expensive houses in the far more fashionable section. The cars were usually small, but they were always spick and span, because these residents of Elmwood spent their Sunday mornings, when they weren't taking care of their small gardens, in looking after their cars. You paid for your car by the month, the way you paid for your house, and if you were careful, you managed to run only a little short each month.

Celia Morrison lived in the tenth house from Greenpoint Avenue on Newridge Avenue. She knew it was the tenth house, for she counted it every time she came home. The second story of her house was green. Celia disliked the house intensely. It was not the kind of a house she wanted to live in. Celia wanted Southampton or Newport, or at least Atlantic City, dinners at Pierre's, Sherry's and the Plaza—and she usually ate at home, and when her newest boy-friend took her to a restaurant it turned out more than likely that the specialty was chop suey.

Celia worked in New York. This meant taking a rather long walk to the Elmwood station, a train to New York, and then the subway each morning. She was a graduate of Dillman Business College and a good stenographer, which was better than it might have been, but not what she had hoped for. Celia had always had grand ideas about a future.

When Celia's mother knocked at her door this particular morning, Celia did not know that spring had come. She did not know it even when she hurried to the bathroom—luckily her father had already shaved, so it was empty. Celia took a hurried shower. In her room she looked at herself critically in the very slender mirror on her closet door. Not bad. She looked better in a bathing-suit than most girls. She was glad of that. A little plump in the hips, maybe. Good skin. Features not exactly perfect—her nose did seem a little short—but, well, not bad either. She wouldn't change appearances with most of the girls she knew, anyhow. Since she was wearing her hair rather short and with big waves in it, she felt it looked better than ever. She was glad she was a natural blonde.

She slipped on her one undergarment, a combination of rather sleazy orchid-colored *crêpe de chine*. Celia washed these out herself when she couldn't persuade her mother to do them for her, and tinted them when the colors got too pale. She added flesh-colored stockings, rolling them tight below her knees. She didn't like the lines that the roll made, but it was too much trouble

fixing them any other way. She made up her face, then—a dab of cold cream, powder, a little of rouge, a touch of an eye-brow pencil, mascara—her lashes were really darker than her hair, but she wanted even more contrast—a dab with a rather bright lip-stick, for she liked her lips red. She slipped on her dress now, a slim, straight, one-piece tan flannel with a wisp of a white collar. She would have been horrified had you suggested that the reason she was cold so frequently in the office and was always calling to the office-boy to close the window was because she was insufficiently clothed. Excepting a coat, Celia never wore any

She told the clerk she was getting ready for an early spring in Virginia.



F. FALLIS
COLLIER
1926

more garments either in winter or summer. Of course if she had been fat—but luckily—

Her mother called to her as her mother always called, just as she was combing her hair:

"Breakfast is ready, Celia. You'll have to hurry if you want to catch the eight-fourteen."

"Ready in a minute, Mamma," Celia called back as she always called back.

She gave a last pat to her hair, grabbed her handkerchief, her bag—opening it to see if her vanity-case and commutation ticket were safe inside—flew down the stairs.

BREAKFAST was ready on the kitchen table by the window—grapefruit, not cut quite as carefully as when there was company, toast, homemade preserves. Celia ate hurriedly, crammed her hat down on her head, then took time to adjust it rather carefully in the mirror which hung near the stairs, called "Good-by," slightly mixed with toast crumbs, and hurried out of the front door—to meet Spring face to face! There was no question about it. You smelled spring and it gave you a peculiar feeling of restlessness and warmth—of wanting adventure. Celia took a deep breath as she turned down Newridge Avenue.

Oh, what was the use of spring in Elmwood? What was the use of *anything*? Nasty little houses all just alike. You didn't know, until you got inside, which house you were in. Working all day and then coming back to Elmwood at night. Working—trains—subways—Elmwood—

Near Greenpoint Avenue a young man stood in front of his house working on his car. It was a small touring car, shiny black and of a make which Celia despised, but which is supposed to be durable and a good buy.

Roy Edwards! Roy had light, rather uneven hair which even when he brushed it was never smooth enough for elegance. Now his hair hung down over his face, for he had been looking for mysterious troubles in his engine. He was a slim fellow in his early twenties—two years older than Celia. He had a lean, earnest face and rather light blue eyes.

"Hello, Celia," Roy called warmly, and added, "Seems like spring this morning, doesn't it?"

In spite of the fact that Celia had had this same thought concerning the weather just a minute before, she disclaimed all possession to it, now.

"Oh, I don't know," she said. "I don't see anything turning green." She looked critically at the slender oak trees planted at mathematically even intervals in the strip of grass between sidewalk and curbing.

"Oh, I don't mean the trees," said Roy. "I mean just—the air or something. Could you hang around a little while, Celia? I'm going to drive into town. I'll get you in early—you won't be more than fifteen minutes late. I'd love to take you. It'll be grand out in the air."

"Sorry," said Celia, and achieved a toss of her head this time. "I've got to hurry down. They're going to have an important conference this morning. I've got to be in time for it. Thanks just the same, Roy."

SHE hurried on, did not even turn at the faint, "Say, Celia—" which reached her ears.

Roy was a nice boy. That was all. Just nice. No excitement there. No romance. Why, Roy didn't have a soul above Elmwood, above Newridge Avenue. He was perfectly satisfied, more than likely, to live right there in Newridge Avenue in a house with tan stucco, probably never even thought of anything better. Even his car was the wrong kind. Roy lived with his father and mother and his married sister and her husband. The house was pretty crowded. Celia knew that. She knew that Roy wanted to get married—wanted to marry her, if it came to that. Huh!

Not that Roy had ever actually proposed, of course—he better not dare; but a girl senses how a man feels about things. Celia wanted more than Roy Edwards could give her. Roy, living here in Newridge Avenue! His little, tinny car! Why, he probably felt a bit superior because he had a car! Her folks didn't have a car at all—they kept their lawn mower and packing boxes in the garage, since they had stopped renting it out.

Celia, because she had paused to talk to Roy, had to run the last two blocks to the train. Other commuters were hurrying from all directions. The train came in just before she reached the station, so she had to run fast for half a block or so.

Most of the commuters read their newspapers in to New York, folding them with many crackles. Celia preferred thinking, or

what passed for thinking with her, a vague dreaming of what she wanted to do, of how she had spent the evening before. When she'd been up late and was too sleepy even to think with comfort, she sometimes managed a short cat-nap on the train. Last night she had had an engagement with George Arnt, who lived in Bayside. George had come with his car and had taken her to the Blue Flag Inn for dancing. She had worn her new green dress and had decided that she looked as well as anyone else there. She had wondered if the other girls there were really society girls, or if they too were girls who "went to business" and who hoped that she thought them society girls. Sleek girls in good-looking clothes, short skirts, bobbed hair, young, slender, a bit hysterical in their gayety, sometimes, under their calm, seemingly cynical exteriors.

Celia had been curiously bored, partly at the restaurant, though it was just like all of the other restaurants she visited, a jazz orchestra at one end, ornate little decorations, little tables all around, an exceedingly smooth dance-floor, and many amber-shaded lights. Maybe it was George who bored her. George was a stupid fellow. He had gone into the coal business with his uncle, and he thought, for some unbelievable reason, that people should be interested in coal. Spring, it seemed, was the time to order your coal for next winter—

Before the train reached New York, Celia stood up, although she knew she didn't save any time that way, and began pushing ever so gently on the people in front of her. When the gates finally opened, she rushed up the stairs to the subway. The subway was crowded, as usual, and warm. A poorly dressed man—some sort of an awful foreigner—pushed her with his shoulder. She made a face at him and tried to wedge her way farther into the car. How she hated subways! Well, she'd marry a rich man and ride in her own car when she came into town at all. Summers at one of the most fashionable beach hotels, or maybe a home in the country and an apartment in town.

Or she'd have a "town house"—that was smarter. All the clothes she wanted. Thirty pairs of shoes. The man in the dream was vague. He would be older, quite an old man—thirty-five or forty, maybe—with sleek, dark hair, starting to grow gray on the temples. He would treat her with wonderful tenderness as if she were very fragile and important, and would always be adjusting a window to suit her or asking her if he could do anything to make her happier. Celia never asked herself where she would meet this paragon, and although she had, in a way, been searching for several years now, her life seemed singularly free of encounters with anyone who resembled him.

She had to push her way out of the car when the subway train reached her station. She was late, but then she was always a little late, so she hurried the two blocks to her office. In the elevator she found herself next to the good-looking man who worked on the ninth floor. She gave him a rather languishing glance and received a half-smile in return. This semi-flirtation had been going on for some months now, but never seemed to get any farther.

Behind the ground-glass door marked "Gatewood Aluminum Company," Miss Hanson was already at the switchboard. Celia nodded a careless "Good-morning." In her own office Celia took off her coat and hat and hung them on the coat-tree in the corner. She had some letters left over from the day before which Mr. Drewsey would want to sign as soon as he came in. Mr. Drewsey never got down before ten o'clock, anyhow, but he always came in as if his coming were an event, and you had to pretend you were waiting for him.

Celia opened the mail that had come in, and arranged it according to Mr. Drewsey's pet system. Then she tapped listlessly on her typewriter. Her speed would never have pleased her instructor at Dillman Business College. She felt that at this moment there was nothing she cared less about than aluminum and whether the Crescent Hardware Company of Gailwood, Ohio, ever received their order of pots and pans.

MR. DREWSEY came in, as Celia knew he would, pompous, important. He took off his hat and hung it on the hat tree, rubbed his hands together, then rubbed his nose with the back of one hand and said:

"Any important mail, Miss Morrison? Did we get that letter from the Irving people? Anyone in to see me?"

Of course no one had been in to see Mr. Drewsey, as he was well aware. His callers knew better than to get there before ten o'clock. Celia took dictation. Mr. Drewsey had a way of dictating at great leisure, chewing half a cigar between sentences,



"I wonder if you knew that I always liked blondes," said the young man. "I'm awfully partial to them."

making unimportant letters seem of great importance and mouthing what he considered well-rounded sentences. Sometimes it seemed to Celia that when a letter was especially difficult he would toss it to her with: "You can write this letter without dictation, Miss Morrison. Just tell them—"

Celia answered telephone calls for Drewsey, made appointments and excuses, listened attentively to Drewsey's story of how clever his seven-year-old boy was, and all about his own golf game. At one o'clock—Drewsey had already gone out—Celia powdered her nose, a little too white of course, but she preferred it that way, ran the comb through her waved, blonde hair and pulled on her hat. She had waited at the office, hoping for a telephone call. She knew several men who occasionally telephoned her and asked her to have lunch with them. No one had telephoned, so she knew she would have to pay for her own lunch. Going down in the elevator, she looked around for the handsome stranger. He was not in sight. She intended flirting just a little more if she saw him. On the street, seemingly looking straight ahead, holding her head rather high, she really looked at everyone on both sides of her. She saw no one she knew or cared anything

about knowing. Where were all the grand men you read about in stories?

She ate lunch at a little basement place called the Green Tree, sitting alone at a tiny painted table ornamented with paper doilies. She had a fifty-cent lunch consisting of a thin yellowish soup—it was too warm for soup, anyhow—chicken croquettes—at least that's what the menu called them—surrounded by pale canned peas, and eked out with a bit of watery mashed potatoes. For dessert she chose cabinet pudding because it seemed a little better than the alternative homemade banana cake.

After lunch she walked slowly down the street. She gazed into the shop-windows, choosing from among their varied contents. A new wrist-watch—hers didn't keep time very well any more. A cute little electric grill—that would be nice if she wanted to fix a bite to eat for one of the boys after the movies. A piece of lingerie in an attractive pale green color—she liked colored underthings.

She had almost reached the office when she heard something a man said as he passed her. He was with another man, and the thing she heard was "that beautiful (Continued on page 102)



Coth at Porutsa

In this story Coth, Knight of Manuel and father of the famous Jorgen,—about whom Mr. Cabell wrote a book that all the modern world has read,—is released from further loyalty to his liege and sent back to Poictesme, there to add his mite to the legend of Manuel that is growing up in the memory. And so this distinguished author brings to a close what he declares will be the last of his stories of Poictesme.

THEY narrate how Dom Manuel, that was the high Count of Poictesme, rode westward with Grandfather Death; and how all save one of Dom Manuel's followers made a lament for his passing. They tell how Manuel straightway became a legend; and how the poets everywhere were rehearsing his valor and his wisdom and his noble excellencies in all the affairs of this life.

But Coth of the Rocks made no lament, and he, most certainly, attempted no rhyming. Coth of the Rocks traveled westward, without any companion, faring alone by land and sea, as far as his maps could guide him, and



By James Branch Cabell

Illustrated by Arthur E. Becher

then he went over the edge of the last one, into a country which was not upon any map. There Coth found a stone image standing in a lonely field that was overgrown with pepper plants. Among these plants charred skulls and ribs and other put-by appurtenances of mankind lay scattered everywhither rather dispiritingly; and before the image were the remnants of yet other burnt offerings, upon a large altar carved everywhere with skulls.

This image was of black stone; from its ears hung rings of gold and silver; in the right hand of the image were four arrows, and the left hand held a curious fan made of a mirror surrounded by green and yellow and blue feathers.

Coth had never before seen such an idol as this. "However, in this unknown region," Coth reflected, "there are, doubtless, a large number of unknown gods. They may not amount to much, but one loses nothing by civility."

Coth knelt, and prayed to this image for protection in his search for his lost liege-lord. Then he heard a voice saying: "Your prayers are granted."

Coth looked upward, still kneeling; and saw that the black image regarded him with living eyes, and that the mouth of this image was now of moving red flesh.

"Your prayers are granted, full measure," the image continued, "because you are the first person of your pallid color and peculiar clothing to come over the edge of the map and worship me. Such enterprise in piety ought to be rewarded: and I shall reward it, prodigally. Baldheaded man with long mustaches, I promise you, upon the oath of the Star Warriors, even by the Word of the Tzitz-Mimé, that you shall rule over all the country of Tollan. So that is settled: and now do you tell me who you are."

"I am Coth of the Rocks, the Alderman of St. Didol. I fol-



lowed Dom Manuel of Poictesme, about whom the poets nowadays are telling so many outrageous lies. I followed him, that is, until he rode westward to a far place beyond the sunset. Now I still follow him, since to do that was my oath; and I have come into the west, not to rule over this outlandish place, but to get news of my master, and to fetch him back into Poictesme."

"You will get no such news from me, for I never heard of this Manuel."

"Why, then, whatever sort of deity can you be?"

"I am Yaotl, the Capricious Lord, the Enemy upon Both Sides. This is my Place of the Dead; but I have everywhere power in this land, and I shall have all power in this land when once I have driven out the Feathered Serpent."

"Then let me tell you, Messire Yaotl, you might very profitably add to this power at least such knowledge as is common to the run of civilized persons. It is not becoming in any deity never to have heard of my liege-lord Dom Manuel, who was the greatest of all Captains, and who founded the Fellowship of the Silver Stallion, of which I have the honor to be a member. Such ignorance appears strange in everybody. In a deity it is perfectly preposterous."

"I was only saying—"

"Stop interrupting me! What sort of god are you, who break in upon the devotional exercises of people when they are actually

upon their knees! It is my custom, sir, whenever I go into a foreign country, to be civil to the gods of that country; and I am thus quite familiar with the behavior appropriate to a deity in such circumstances. When people pray to you, you ought to exhibit more repose of manner and a certain well-bred reticence."

"Oh, go away," said the image of Yaotl, "and stop lecturing me! Go up into Porutsa yonder, where the Taoltecs live, and where it may be they have heard of your Dom Manuel, since the Taoltecs also are fools and worship the Feathered Serpent. And when you are Emperor over the country of Tollan, do you come back and pray to me more civilly."

Coth rose up from his kneeling, in strong indignation. "Upon no terms would I consent to be Emperor of this outlandish place. And as for ever praying to you again, do you instantly tell me what you meant by saying, 'The Taoltecs also are fools,' because I do not understand that 'also.'"

"But," said the image wearily, "but you will have to be Emperor, now that I have sworn it upon the oath of the Star Warriors. I do not deny that I spoke hastily; even so, I did say it, with an unbreakable oath; and the affair is concluded."

Coth replied: "Stuff and nonsense!"

"You are now," continued the image of Yaotl, "under my protection: and as a seal of this, I must put upon you three obligations. We will make them very light ones, since this is but a



Thiapas, were used to come into Porutsa almost thus lightly clad; and it was evident enough that this fair-skinned stranger, with the bare, great, round pink head, came unarmed with anything except the equipments of nature.

Coth sold his peppers, and went striding about the marketplace inquiring for news of Dom Manuel, but none of these charcoal- and copper-colored persons seemed ever to have heard of the gray champion. When the market for that day was over, then Coth—with the friendly guidance of a brown-eyed girl who had been selling water-cresses in the market—went up into the hills about Tzatzitepec; and Coth spent three days there.

matter of form. We will merely forbid you to do such things as no sane person would ever dream of doing in any event; and thus nobody will be discommoded."

Coth cried out: "Bosh!"

"So you must not go naked in public; you must avoid any dealings with green peppers such as you see over yonder; and the third obligation which I now put upon you I shall not bother to reveal, because you are certain to find this obligation even more easy to keep than the others. I have spoken."

"I know well enough that you have spoken! But you have spoken balderdash. For if you for one moment think I am going to be bullied by you and your obligations—"

But Coth saw that the image had closed its eyes, and had tranquilly turned back in all to stone, and was not heeding him any longer.

Coth was goaded, by such incivility, from indignation into a fine rage. He addressed the idol at some length, in terms which no person, whether human or divine, could have construed as worshipful. He gathered from the plants about him an armful of green peppers; he took off his clothes; and he left them there in a heap upon the altar that was carved with skulls. He went up into the city of Porutsa and sat down in the marketplace, crying: "Who will buy my green peppers!" None of the Tzotzecs hindered him, because the hill people, from Uro and Hipal and

On the fourth day he returned to the marketplace in Porutsa; and there he again sold green peppers, so that this browbeating Yaotl might have no least doubt as to the value which Coth set on this god's patronage.

And all went well enough for a while. But by and by five soldiers came into the marketplace, and so to where Coth had just disposed of the last bunch of peppers; and the leader of these soldiers said: "Our Emperor desires speech with you."

"Well," Coth returned, "I am through with my day's work, and I can conveniently spare him a moment or two."

He went affably with these soldiers, and they led him to the Emperor Vemac. "Who are you?" said the Emperor, first of all. "And what is your business in Porutsa?"

"I am an outlander called Coth of the Rocks, a dealer in green peppers, and I came hither to sell my green peppers."

"But why do you come into my city wearing no blanket and no loin-cloth and, in fact, nothing whatever except a scowl?"

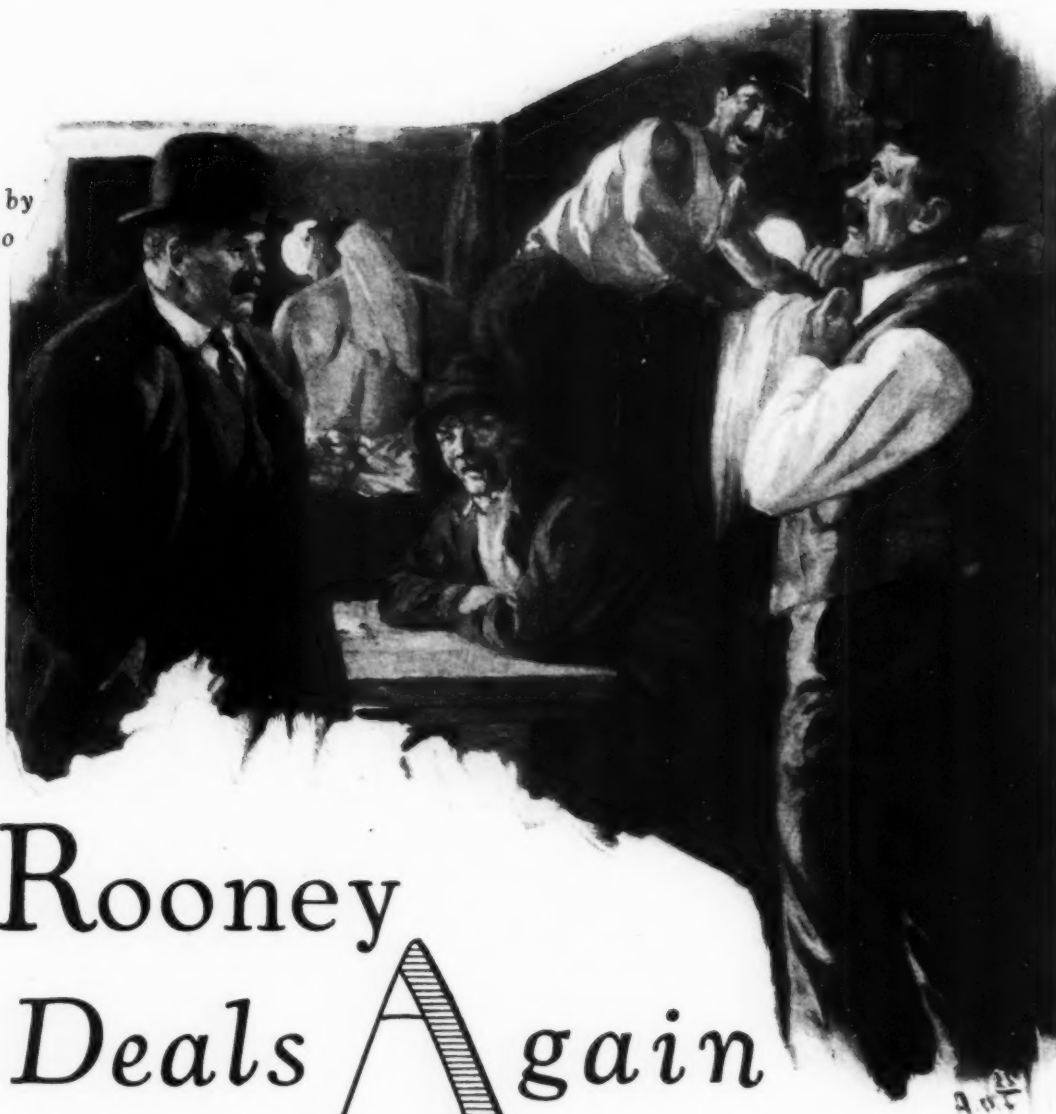
"That is because of an obligation which was laid upon me by an impudent black rascal who carried arrows and a fan with a mirror in it, and who called himself Yaotl."

"Blessed be the name of that god," said the Emperor Vemac, "although we worship the Feathered Serpent, and not the Capricious Lord!"

(Continued on page 96)

Illustrated by
Anton Otto
Fischer

"I am not,"
snapped Reilly.
"Me work is cut
out for me in
'Frisco, and dirty
work it's to be."



Mrs. Rooney Deals Again

By Arthur Mason

"HE'S been two months aboard the ship, and he aint spoke a civil word to a man of us. Snaps and growls night and day, he does."

"There's something on his mind, John," replied Skysail Pete.

"There is that. A sailor-man don't cuss calms and head winds, he don't. He leaves that for the Cap'n to do."

"I heard him speak to the mate when he fust came on board at Sydney. 'Is she a fast packet?' asks he. 'Fast enough for you,' says the mate. 'I don't know,' says he; 'she's got to go some to relieve the conscience of me.'"

"There you have it, Pete. Now wot's on his mind?"

Pete shook his head. "I aint aiming to know."

The sailor they were talking about was a one-eyed man who answered to the name of Reilly. A very disagreeable sailor he was; oaths flew out of him without provocation, and he seemed at odds with everything—ship, weather and sea. Not a man would he take into his confidence. Then one night, a couple of weeks before the ship arrived in San Francisco, he unloaded his grievance.

It was in the dogwatch. The crew were sitting on the fore-hatch. A happy enough lot they were, laughing and talking about the hold women had on men. Reilly was walking up and down, and the bare feet of him went *pitter-patter* on the deck. One

of his trouser-legs was rolled up to the knee. His sharp shin looked like the face on an angle-iron. Old John was calculating women's worth.

"They're a decent lot on the whole," said he. "I don't know how us would get along without 'em. They're comfortin' to a man at any age—"

Caught by the words, Reilly halted abreast of the hatch.

"What the hell does yese know about women?"

"I've had me outings," answered John.

Reilly came back: "That's why ye're here today, slaving as ye are. Whist, all of ye, for ye're nothing but a bunch of auld clucking hens. Lemme tell yese what women are. They're like a snaky waterspout. Defy the wind, they do, and pay damned little heed to the current. Look out when they spill themselves. God A'mighty couldn't stay their hands."

A hoarse chuckle came from several throats. "He's hell on 'em, all right," remarked a red-headed sailor. Skysail Pete spoke up:

"You seem to know something, hey?"

"I do, me bucko. Open up yer ears and listen to me. Ye're all wondering why I'm so upset with meself on this ship. Well, here's why:

"Five months ago I was shanghaied on board of a Dago ship by

one of yer fine women—the kind a man would trust, too. Now what do ye think of that? Are yese listening?"

"Sure. Go on, Reilly, go on."

"Five months ago I was a dacent man. This is how it happened: I was walking down the front of Market Street in San Francisco, and me tooth had a taste for a bite of something to eat. I stops in front of a place with crabs in the window. Says I to meself: 'Sure, an' they're good enough for any man to sink his teeth into.' I looks around a bit, and opposite me, across the street, I spies a little gin-mill, painted green. It also had crabs in the window. Mind ye now, some power stronger than meself pulled me across there to me ruin."

"Was she handsome?" Skysail Pete wanted to know.

"What are ye talking about, ye auld spavined shell-back? I hadn't laid me eye on her."

"And it's only one eye he has; give him time," came from another corner.

"Keep yer clapper closed and hear me story!"

"Go on, Reilly," they clamored.

"Well, as I was saying, I went across the street, and looked at the crabs in that window; big they were, with claws on thim a coupla inches thick."

"I know the kind," said Pete; "a bit of salt and pepper on them, and they're fine for a man's stumick."

"Aye, they are," went on Reilly. "but they were damned hard on my stumick—as ye shall hear. I walks into the gin-mill with its Irish harp stuck over the door. Happy I was, with no thought of danger. A woman stood behind the bar, with a touch of frost in her hair, and it parted in the middle; big blue eyes she had, stuck in a round face, and the lips of her were like curled rosewood."

"I know the kind," remarked Pete, knocking the ashes out of his pipe.

"Ye know nothing about this woman. Listen, I'm telling ye. Says I: 'Me good lady, what's yer crabs worth?' She gives me wan look. Mind ye, I had me best on, from me boots to me head. Her eyes wandered over me: 'Sure,' says she, 'as fine a looking man as ye are can have what he wants for the asking.' 'Hold on now,' says I. 'I'm not cutting me wisdom teeth. Set a price on yer crabs.' Her next words were: 'Are ye from the auld country?' 'I am,' says I, 'and what of it?' Says she: 'Ye're the first dacent Irishman I've set me eyes on since me poor Dan passed away, and that'll be a year come Thoorsday.'"

"She was getting to you, then," put in Pete.

A lime-juice sailor flipped his bare feet on the deck.

ARTHUR MASON knows wind-jammers and lime-juicers and the men who go down to the sea in ships. For since he ran away from his home in Ireland at the age of twelve, he has sailed up and down the world. And here's Mrs. Rooney, a one-time friend of his of 'Frisco's old Barbary Coast.

"Me bloody word, she was reaching hout for 'im, I'll say."

Reilly looked down at him scornfully. "There's naither wan of yese knows what yese be talking about."

"Leave Reilly tell it," came a chorus of voices. "Go on, Mike."

"Well, men, there aint much more to tell now, but be heavens, there will be when I gits back to 'Frisco."

"What about the Dago ship?" asked old John.

"I was coming to that," replied Reilly. "As I was saying, her and I gits to talking, and I find she's from Ireland too. 'Mrs. Ellen Rooney's me name,' says she; 'and Dan, that was me husband, was known on the Seven Seas for his ginerosity. Never would he turn a man from the door. Ah, and his soul rests in heaven now. Eat a crab, or a half-dozen for that matter. They're free to ye, and so is the bar and everything behind it. Is it a bottle of porter ye'll be having?'"

"'Tis," says I; 'but I'll be payin'.'



Mrs. Rooney looked at herself in the mirror behind the bar. "It's a bit gray I'm getting. Do you mind?"

"Keep yer money in yer pocket," says she. "There's no man from Ireland will spend a dime over my bar."

"I drunk me porter and eat me crab, and all the while we was talking."

"Is it a sailor ye are?" she asked me then. "Ah, and it's the hard life ye must be having."

Pete scratched his head. "That's the time he should have left—hey, John?"

"Aye, I'd 'a' been getting jubious myself, then."

"You're a smart passel of beachcombers," snapped Reilly, his temper flaring. "Hear me out and see how ye would have handled her any better."

"As I was telling ye, I eats me crab and tosses a bottle of stout into me. Then says she: 'Have a taste of me poor dead husband's private stock.'"

"I will," says I, "in memory of him if he was a good man."

"Says she, setting the bottle on the bar: 'There wasn't a coal-heaver, or a longshoreman, or a sailor for that matter, that wouldn't lay their lives down for him. God rest his soul. Here's a tumbler for ye. Help yerself.'"

"Then she poured out a good stiff jolt of it. I remember drinking it, all right, but soon afterwards me consciousness grew dim. I kep' a-holding onto the bar, and it looked to me as if forty Mrs. Rooneys stood waverin' backwards and for'ards in front of me. I have a faint ricollection of hearing her speak to a man that walked into the joint—"

"Now you're coming to it, Reilly," chuckled Pete. Old John also was getting excited. "What did she say to him?"

"There's where you were hooked. You couldn't see him."

"Of course he couldn't. Wasn't he fast to the bar?"

"If I could have laid me eye on him," went on Reilly, "me brain would have taken a different twist entirely. Aint that enough for ye? Anyway, she spoke to him. 'Everything is all right, me man,' says she. Then I mind her scouring me with her big blue eyes. 'Come back in half an hour,' says she. 'I'll need ye then.'"

Pete rose to his feet. "You don't need to say any more, Reilly. Us knows the rest. Don't we, men?"

"Aye, we do that."

"Let him finish," urged old John.

"There's nothing more to tell," said Reilly with a helpless gesture of his big hands. "I woke up with a smell of garlic in me nose and the roll of a ship under me body. 'What,' says I to meself, 'am I dreaming?' I gits out of me bunk and staggers out to the deck. It was no dream at all, at all, but a Dago ship that I'd been shanghaied on, away to Australia. Not a word could I speak to the crew, but I did make the sign of the cross on meself. And a vow I took, then and there. Says I: 'Mike Reilly, ye've got something to live for now, as long as the lungs of ye take air. It's back ye'll go to 'Frisco, and may the Lord have mercy on Mrs. Ellen Rooney!'"

Eight bells went clanging over the ship. Reilly pulled himself together and started aft to relieve the wheel. "It's the disgrace of it that's ruined me standing," they heard him mutter.

Pete and John went to their watch below in the forecabin and yarned yet awhile.

"Reilly's in a bad state of mind," remarked John. "He might kill that woman."

Pete began to comb his beard. "It aint any of our business what he does to her. She deserves all that's coming to her, I'm thinkin'."

"She don't, either," returned John. "It's the crimp that Reilly ought to get after. The poor woman may be entirely innocent."

"Well," said Pete, as he gave one last stroke to his beard before tucking his comb under his pillow, "what's the use in arguing? The ship will be in 'Frisco in another couple weeks, and mind what I'm telling you: Reilly wont lay a hand on that Rooney woman. I know her kind, and the slippery way they has with sailor-men. I've just got this much more to say: If a man'll sheer clear of women, he don't need to fear the world."

"That can't be done," growled John. "Douse the glim now. No more yapping this watch."

ONE morning a couple of weeks later land-birds were sighted. The news was conveyed to Reilly, who had the morning watch, below.

"It wont take long now till you see that woman of yours," called Skysail Pete.

Reilly jumped out of his bunk. "Show me them birds," said he. "I believe nothing—only what I can sling me eye on."

"Come out on deck, then," said Pete. Reilly tumbled out.

"Now look up there by the main truck. See them?"

"I do, me bucko. Are ye sure they're from the land, Pete?"

"Aye, that I am. John had the four-to-six wheel. 'There's land birds about,' says he. 'They aint,' says I. 'I knows shore birds when I sees them,' says he, '—and feels them too, for that matter.' 'Feels them?' says I. 'Yes,' says he, 'they've been showering gravel down on the deck.'"

For the first time on that passage home a smile cracked out on Reilly's face. "The sight of them birds warms the heart of me," said he, "wherever the hell they're from."

"You'll not be staying long by the ship?" Pete asked.

Reilly rolled his eye. "The minute the hook is down, I'm away to the woman that ruined me."

"My advice to you, Reilly—" Pete held up a thick tarry finger. "Look out for her. I knows women."

TWENTY-FOUR hours later the ship dropped anchor in San

Francisco Bay, and according to custom a number of crimps boarded her, trying out their old tricks of bribing the crew to leave, and promising them a wide range of choice from steam yachts to life-saving jobs. As Reilly was getting into his goashore clothes, a heavy-set crimp walked into the forecabin.

"You leaving her?" he asked.

Reilly, who had his back to the crimp, turned around. Where had he heard that voice before? Their eyes met. The crimp stood pat. Reilly spoke:

"I'm leaving her, I am, for a good reason."

"Us know, don't we, Reilly?" piped up Pete.

"Aye, that yese do." Reilly's whole bearing bespoke vengeance; and Hogan the crimp felt an inward tremor. His color changed to a dirty yellow. "You're going to a boarding-house?" he asked.

"I am not," snapped Reilly. "Me work is cut out fer me while I stay in 'Frisco, and damned dirty work it's going to be."

Hogan the crimp squeezed himself out of the forecabin, hurried into his boat, and rowed speedily ashore. He ran all the way to Mrs. Rooney's saloon. Panting, it was later learned, he broke the news of Reilly's return.

"He's going to kill you," he warned. "I could see it in that one eye of his. Git out of town fer a while, till he leaves port again. I'll see that he goes."

Mrs. Rooney wiped the top of the bar with calm composure.

"I'm not going away from my little place, Hogan," said she, "for any man alive. Let Reilly come. Ye can leave him to me. Now go on about yer business."

Still Hogan, duty bound, weakly responded: "I'd better be keeping an eye on you, just the same, Mrs. Rooney."

"Divil an eye do I want of ye at all, at all. Be off with ye."

Then Mrs. Rooney retired to a back room to prepare herself for the arrival of one-eyed Reilly.

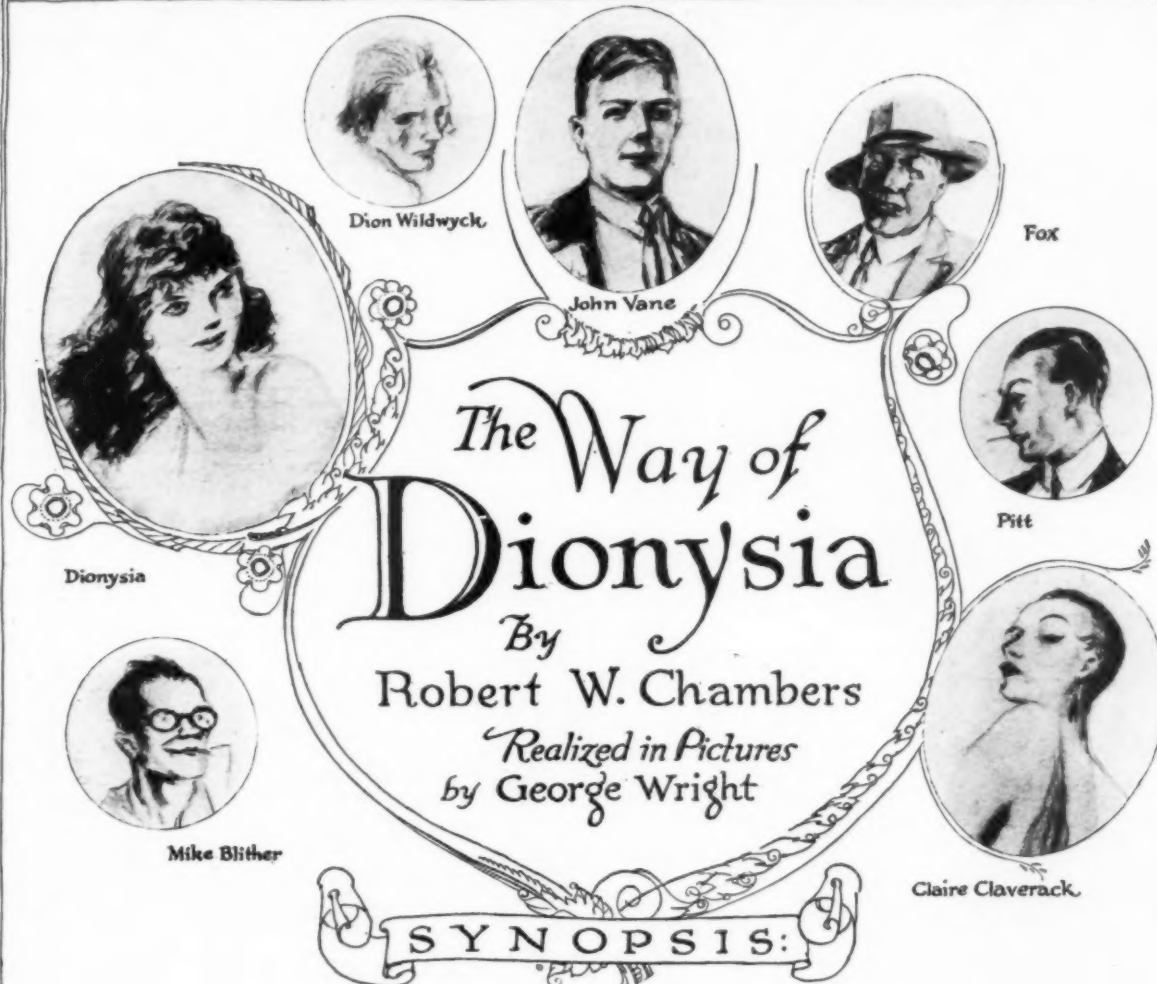
In an hour he came, his boots knocking the pavement in his impatience to reach the green-front gin-mill. He strode into the barroom, kicking up the sawdust. There he stopped. He thought he had pockets full of words to hurl at her, but not one could he get out of him. Mrs. Rooney stood ready behind the bar. A full-blown rose glowed crimson in her hair; her bosom was girted up and boomed out from her stiff-figured green dress.

Reilly felt himself engulfed in the blue of her eyes, the satisfying beauty of her, the easy comfort; the warm smile she turned on him gophered the roots from under him. He was like a wilted vine. She waited until he had looked his fill before she spoke.

"So it's back ye are, Mr. Reilly!" Her words were as soft as a warm sunny breeze. "Not a word did ye say when ye sailed away! And me here, straining the eyes out of me head for the last five months, for a sight of ye! Ah, ye men are all alike! Ye twiddle with the strings of a woman's heart—"

"Hold on," said Reilly, pulling himself out from under the spell she was casting. "You can't come that palaver on me. I'm on to ye. Ye shanghaied me onto a Dago ship. Now I'm after the blood-money ye got fer me. And what's more, I'm here to break ye and turn the law loose on ye—and after that it's between me and me Maker what I do to ye!" He walked up to the bar threateningly, his one eye glowering. Mrs. Rooney never budged. She looked straight back into that flaming eye of his, and laughed. So heartily did she laugh that her turquoise earrings twittered, and her soft pink flesh shimmied like jelly. Then all at once she sobered up and pointed a fat finger at him.

"So that's the kindness I get from you, telling me I stowed ye away on a Dago ship! After ye making love to me that night, and the promises ye made! Didn't ye tell me that ye'd marry me when ye came back again? Haven't I told the neighbors fer miles around what was going to happen to me, and here I am in a fine new dress waiting to receive (Continued on page 153)



DIONYSIA'S amazing career was perhaps decided when her mother died at her birth and left the child's upbringing to her actor father Dion Wildwyck. Her childhood was spent among one-night stands; and when she was ten and her father was taken ill, she went with him to a little place in Florida which he had purchased. Soon afterward he died, leaving Dionysia to the care of an equally impoverished family named Marmaduke. For a few years the Marmadukes assisted her in marketing her few oranges and grapefruit; and then—something of importance occurred.

She was bathing in the lagoon one day when a launch put in from a yacht, and scarcely had she finished dressing when two men appeared at the door of her home.

The larger of the two was big Fred Fox, and he was promoting a Beauty Show at Miami. The slim, rat-faced young man was Harry Pitt.

"Say, girlie," said Mr. Fox, "I lamped you through my glass, and it oughta be easy money for you in the Beauty Show I'm working up."

They urged her to sign with Mr. Fox and to enter the show as "Miss Everglades." For a long time Dionysia had longed for a brilliant stage career, and this seemed her opportunity. She had neither clothes nor money, but Fred Fox offered to back her to the limit—and that afternoon Dionysia boarded the launch of big Fred Fox.

In Miami, Fox and Pitt outfitted Dionysia and had her carefully groomed for the contest. But when the great Miami Beauty Show was judged, Dionysia was not even mentioned in the awards.

So Fox coolly dropped her as a failure, leaving her stranded in Miami. But Pitt got her a job as an extra in a film company, Mike Blither's Bathing Beauties, "on location" in the neighborhood. By turns she was a mermaid, a siren, a tarpon, a crayfish. Several times she was plain—and unmistakable—girl.

Toward the end of the film Mike gave her a livery nag, rigged out as a seahorse, to ride on. In the first rehearsal the swimming horse rolled over with her. Somebody dragged her out and rang up an ambulance; and the rehearsal continued. When Dionysia recovered, the Bathing Beauties had departed, and her money was exhausted. Perforce she sought a job—and landed a place as a waitress in the hotel.

Presently Pitt appeared and took Dionysia motoring. It was that afternoon, while running blindly down the road to escape the over-ardent Pitt, that she literally collided with her fate and John Vane, a wealthy young man who was on vacation in Florida.

To Dionysia, Vane seemed all that was desirable. And when he had boarded the train returning to New York, who should he meet but his waitress protégée, who was determined to seek theatrical fortune in New York.

All the berths were taken, but Vane gave up the lower berth of his section to Dionysia—and soon found that gossiping acquaintances had carried the story to his wealthy fiancée Claire Claverack, with the result that she promptly broke their engagement. And shortly thereafter Vane met Dionysia again—she had found employment as an entertainer at the Club Circe. (Now turn the page and read on:)



IT had been a disastrous vacation for John Vane. To lose one girl he wanted; to be pursued by another he didn't want; and to find that the real-estate business was very bad—all this upset him. So to rid his mind of troubles, he plunged into a fresh one, and put all his money into a hazardous real-estate operation in Westchester.

Nevertheless at the end of the month he remembered Dionysia, and went to see her. To his surprise and disgust, he found she had landed in "The Westchester Follies" on a salary sufficient to keep her alive. He had the entrée, backstage, and sought her there.

"You see," she said happily, "I am already on my way to fame. And I hope that means I am on my way to you, also—"

"Do you fancy you're in love with me?" he demanded.

"I know I am."

"Well," he said, "I'd better tell you that I'm in a Westchester folly myself, and probably it will ruin me."

"Mine won't ruin me," she said. "And as soon as I'm famous, I'll have enough for both—" But Dionysia was proving too modern for him, so he took abrupt leave of her. . . .



IT promised to be a lonely Christmas Eve for John Vane. His late fiancée had already become engaged to another man; the Westchester deal was turning out badly; he had neither seen nor heard from Dionysia.

He went once to the Westchester Follies; but all the girls were undressed and all looked alike, and he didn't recognize her.

"Poor little devil," he thought, "she'll be lonely too after the show on Christmas Eve!"

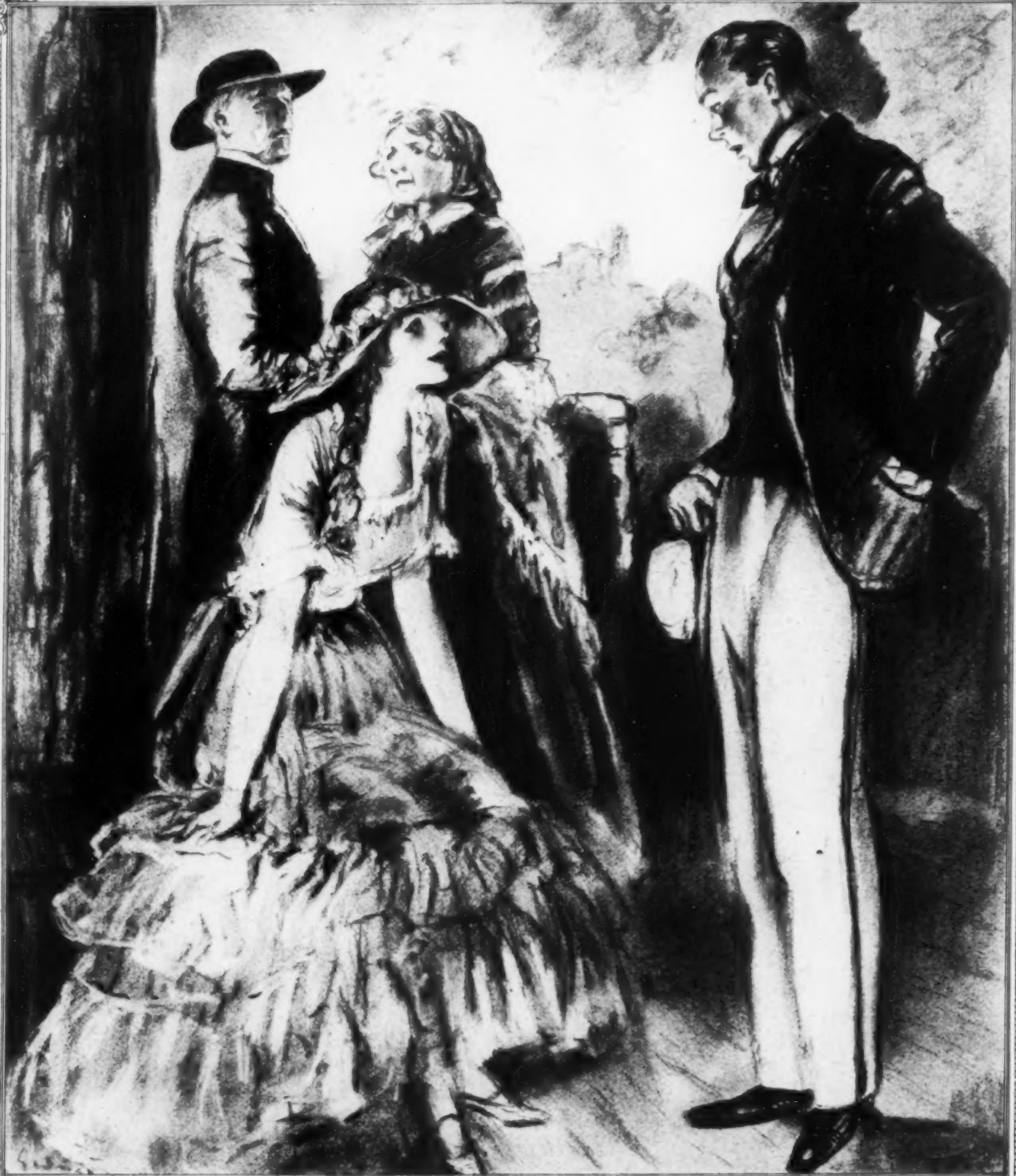
So he went out and bought her a fur neck-piece; and after the show on Christmas Eve he called at her boarding-house.

It appeared she had added a parlor to her bedroom, and it was full of noisy young fellows and girls dancing. Dionysia, one arm full of roses, sat on top of the piano waving a glass of champagne and singing. When she saw him, she sprang toward him, inundating him with roses and wine.

"My first party!" she cried. "I'm having such a good time! Shall we dance?"

"Not the dance you'd like to lead me," he said coolly. And leaning to her ear: "Here's your damned present. Merry Christmas!"

And he went out in a rage with all the world.



WHEN he awoke next morning he thought of Dionysia as he had last seen her. It enraged him. He was through. But he thought about her that day, and the next, and the next, and, more or less, every day during the next few months.

He was sore, but he was through. But that he did not forget her made him uneasy.

In his waking hours he thought of her as "that little fool." In his dreams she was Dionysia, and he seemed to be happy to be with her.

Without realizing he was waiting to hear from her, he

waited every day. At the end of three months he telephoned to her and learned she had moved, leaving no address.

That startled him; he went to the theater for information, and learned that she had joined a stock-company out West, and was playing ingénue parts on a small salary in legitimate drama.

That night he sent her a telegram: "Are you all right, Dionysia?"

Her reply by wire came next day: "It is wonderful. I am on my way to fame and you know what else!"

The telegram did not chill him.



A YEAR later, on Christmas Day, Vane had a letter from Dionysia enclosing two hundred and fifty dollars in bills. It read:

"Dear Mr. Vane:

"Here is what you lent me. If your business continues bad, wont you let me lend you some? I live economically and have saved quite a little.

"I am very happy. I'm learning. It's as easy as breathing to me. I am what they call a quick study. They mean that I am able to learn my parts quickly. Everybody is kind to me. I play very small parts.

"To earn some more money I entered a beauty show in St. Louis awhile ago, and I won it, too. And besides that I have made over seven hundred dollars selling my photograph for ads.

"Dear, dear Mr. Vane, please don't marry anybody before I am famous and you can see me again. I haven't done anything to be ashamed of so far, and I hereby promise you not to.

"I'm hurrying as fast as I can to be worthy of your ardent attention. Please be patient with me.

"Dionysia."



JOHN VANE'S venturesome scheme for suburban real-estate development in Westchester went very wrong—with the result that financial worry was driving Dionysia from his mind.

Presently he gave up his car, his opera seat, all of his clubs except one, and was obliged to move from his luxuriously appointed Park Avenue apartment to two small rooms in Chelsea.

He had not heard from Dionysia in a year. He thought of her seldom, and, he thought, scarcely cared about her any more.

But on Christmas Eve the memory of her came back to him in a rather painful fashion. He had dined alone at his only remaining club, and feeling much too spiritless to seek further amusement, he had returned to his two little rooms in Chelsea.

And there he found a telegram waiting for him—from Dionysia:

"A gay Christmas to you. I am having a wonderful one. Our leading man and I are giving a party for the stage children. He is the best-looking thing and very seriously devoted. Isn't life wonderful!"



NOT long afterward New York daily papers reported that the celebrated and beloved novelist Stanley Ferrass had picked from an obscure stock-company a very young girl to create the part of *Dionysia* in his own dramatization of his famous novel of that title.

The press also played up the amusing coincidence in names. It all made wonderful publicity, of course, but nobody quite believed that the unknown actress' name really was *Dionysia*.

John Vane, with astonishment and oddly jangled emotions, read of these doings while he was fighting off impending bankruptcy.

One snowy day in January he walked into *Dionysia* on Fifth Avenue. She caught him by both hands, laughing and crying in her excitement.

And, "Oh, my dear, my dear," *Dionysia* repeated, "we've nearly got each other! You haven't married anybody else, have you?"

He slowly shook his head, smiling at her; for she was unquestionably the loveliest thing that ever this young man had looked upon.

(The brilliant career of *Dionysia*, as revealed in pictures next month, is interesting indeed.)

The Teeney Treasure

By
James Francis Dwyer

This offers evidence that memory and imagination can bridge any distance. For though it is a tale of the Salem of the clipper ships and of today, it was written at Biskra in the Sahara, by a man who was born in Australia. Really Mr. Dwyer's home is in France, but he likes the desert in winter. There, he says, "the climate may be depended upon."

Illustrated by
Charles Sarka



After the service Teeney pulled the nose of the Reverend Fairweather.

rified their New England families. Waited on by giggling wenches with almond eyes and plastered hair, one wench behind the cushion of each captain, pushing forward a shark fin or some other ungodly tidbit as the guest required it. And a lot of the captains were elders in their home-town churches too!

Little the skippers told about those dinners when they got home to Salem, Boston and Newburyport. China was far away, and they politely parried the questions of the inquisitive. Was there any fun out there? Oh, well, hard-drinking sailors seemed to enjoy foreign ports, but for gentlemen commanders it was dry stuff.

Chaffering with merchants, bullying crews and coolies, rushing round in rickshaws from godown to godown. Hardly pleasant. Yes, it's nice to be home. New England seems so sweet and clean and peaceful after the filth of the East.

Now, there was Captain Jack Teeney. Finest skipper that ever took a boat by Salem Light. Six feet two in stocking feet, muscled like an athlete, shining black hair, clear blue eyes, and a fist that could floor the toughest bully that ever crawled into a forecassle. Well, a princess fell in love with Captain Jack Teeney.

A wonderful princess! A tiny thing in spun silk whom the famous Chi-pei—who made portraits of charming ladies by dipping his supple fingers into glowing colors—would have given his soul to paint. She suggested a cherry tree in early spring, a lily-cov-

CONSIDER, for a moment, New England in the days of its romantic adventuring. Clipper ships out of Boston and Salem, Portsmouth and Newburyport, racing to the Orient under clouds of canvas. Scores of them! New England sailors singing chanteys now forgotten; tough boys from the little Tyres and Sidons of our rock-bound coast; swaggering fellows who knew the Long Bund of Canton, the muddy lanes of Woosung, and the gilded tea-houses along the *Da-mo-lu* better than they knew the clean little streets of their home towns. Great days!

Dashing, hard-driving clipper-ship captains wearing white pantaloons, flowered-silk vests, tight-fitting coats and high stocks, who hobnobbed with rich Chinese merchants in pagoda-like palaces, eating watermelon seeds, dried persimmons, swallows' nests, sharks' fins, palms of bears, and foreign kickshaws that would have hor-



A woman flung her arms about young Teeney's neck and cried: "Beloved, you have come!"

ered pool, a patch of liquid moonlight. Away from her—on the sea or at Salem—Captain Teeney wondered if she really existed.

Captain Jack Teeney was a widower. His wife, a Newburyport girl, had been dead two years when he met the Princess. He had a boy of ten, Richard Teeney, and a little girl of four, named Deborah. They lived on the Teeney place just out of Salem on the old Andover Highroad, a quiet house approached by a long avenue of elms. The two children were looked after by a very reliable woman named Jane Pettigrew.

Little scraps of gossip regarding the Princess and Captain Jack drifted back to Salem. The Princess, so other skippers asserted, was so much in love with Captain Teeney that when his ship, *The Green Mermaid* of Salem, reached the *Chu-kiang*, she was always there with palanquins and rickshaws and a retinue of servants to whisk the Captain away to wonderful dinners that she gave in his honor. It was all perfectly proper, but you cannot keep sailors from embroidering their stories.

The Reverend Moses Fairweather, pastor of Captain Teeney's

church, heard the gossip. Pie for the pastor! He was fagging up on a sermon dealing with the actions of Salem sailors in foreign ports, taking for his text the third verse of the seventh chapter of Deuteronomy, beginning: "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them." He fired his gun on a Sabbath when Captain Teeney attended the little church on Derby Street, and he pointed the gun so straight at the Captain that after the service Teeney walked around to the rear of the church and pulled the long nose of the Reverend Moses Fairweather. Pulled it hard, according to the written report of the affair which you can still read in Salem Town.

Captain Jack Teeney cleared ship on that very same Sabbath, thus making himself, by the double offense, an outlaw to the congregation. He made Canton in eighty-three days, flying, most of the way, every inch of the ten thousand running yards of canvas *The Green Mermaid* carried. He met the Princess and told her what had happened; and she, so it was discovered many, many years later, advised Captain Jack to return to Salem, collect his

"She better mind her own business instead o' makin' inquiries about my people."

son and daughter, and come back swiftly to Canton, where he and she would be married and live in her palace in the *Tai-shi-kai*, which is in the Old City.

Captain Jack Teeney found the advice rather difficult to follow. He was part owner of *The Green Mermaid*; and his partner, Alden Hunnewell of Salem, had not the money to buy him out. Neither could he, Teeney, buy out Hunnewell. The Princess solved the difficulty. She presented to Captain Jack Teeney something that he could turn into money the moment he reached America, and with the cash, buy out his partner and return with the ship and his family to Canton. She gave to Captain Teeney "The Tear of Tao-tang."

"The Tear of Tao-tang," now known to the world by another and less poetical name, is probably the most remarkable pearl that has ever been discovered. It forms a double teardrop of great size and exquisite "skin." Legend has it that a water nymph named Tao-tang loved a handsome fisher youth of Ma-su, an island at the mouth of the port of Swatow. She wished the boy to see her home under the sea, and he agreed to descend with her. Being a disciple of Ho-fu, who taught that politeness alone would bring a person to Paradise, the boy could not tell the nymph that he was drowning as she led him from one coral arbor to another. When he suddenly paused while expressing wonder at her undersea domain, she thought he was stricken with bashfulness. It was only when he toppled over and expired that she realized what she had done. Her grief was so great that there fell from her eyes two enormous teardrops which joined as they fell into the gaping shell of an oyster, forming the wonderful double pearl which was called the Tear of Tao-tang.

The clipper-ship record between Canton and Salem was broken by *The Green Mermaid* on the homebound trip. Captain Teeney drove her. She carried away her fore- and maintopmasts rounding the Horn, but Teeney was not depressed. He was on deck twenty

hours out of the twenty-four. Captain Jack was very indignant. Byron, shaking the dust of England from his feet, had nothing on him. He'd give the Reverend Moses Fairweather and the saintly folk of Salem something to talk about. They'd run him, would they! Holy sniffers with big ears swung wide for gossip! He'd show Salem what a Teeney thought of its rock-ribbed narrowness. By heaven, yes!

Plunging into Salem harbor went *The Green Mermaid*, with the Tear of Tao-tang nestling beneath the tight-fitting coat of Captain Jack Teeney—the priceless pearl that great love had brought into being.

The Green Mermaid docked on the afternoon of April 15, 1861;





and exactly one week later—on the afternoon of April 22—the Reverend Moses Fairweather read the burial service over Captain Jack Teeney as the gallant skipper was laid to rest in the old Salem cemetery. A little cowardly was the Reverend Fairweather. He annoyed many friends of the dead Captain by taking as his text for the funeral oration the words: "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." Fairweather believed in putting an enemy out good and proper when you had him down.

Captain Teeney's death startled New England. After clearing his ship, he had dined with the surveyor of the Port of Salem, and then, sometime before midnight, had walked out along the

He laughed softly, closed his eyes and died.

The perpetrators of the crime could not be discovered. The motive was unknown. The authorities of Salem knew nothing of the Tear of Tao-tang which Captain Jack Teeney carried on the night of the attack—nothing at all. The evidence proved that two men had followed Teeney when he turned into the elm avenue leading up to his house. The footprints showed that the Captain, finding that he was trailed, had turned upon the two, and a great struggle had evidently preceded the firing of the shot that finished the fight. The word "*litre*," the two little squares, and the capital "*M*" suggested nothing. The red lacquer box gave no clue.

old Andover Highroad to the Teeney place, where Jane Pettigrew kept house and looked after the two Teeney children.

He didn't reach the house. Early next morning he was found in the elm avenue leading up from the highroad, a bullet wound in his neck, a small red lacquer box floating on the sea of blood in which he lay.

They carried him into Salem in a dying condition, but his great physical strength enabled him to put up a fight for life that surprised the doctor. On the seventeenth he recovered consciousness and tried to speak. He could not. He signaled for pen and paper, but before he could write, he slipped again into a state of coma.

On the nineteenth he again recovered his wits and grasped the pen. With a tremendous effort he wrote one word, made two little squares after it, then glanced inquiringly at the group around his bed. The doctor and Teeney's friends stared at the word and the two small squares. The word was "*litre*." It meant nothing to them. Neither did the two squares.

Again Captain Jack grasped the pen. With a dying effort he placed a capital "*M*" after the squares, the pen dropping from his hand as he tried to continue. The doctor, a good soul who thought to soothe the dying moments of a friend, nodded vigorously although he had not the slightest idea what it was that Teeney wished to tell. But the doctor's nods pleased the Captain.

(Continued on page 106)

Tides

By Julian Street

Illustrated by

C. D. Williams

The Story So Far:

A VERY American community, that quiet Chicago suburb of Oakland in the early eighties, concerned for the most part with its families and its politics, dwelling in ample houses insulated from each other by wide lawns and many vacant lots. But now unrest and change had come—and the shadow of scandal.

For one fateful day Luke Holden (regarded by his neighbors as something of a political infidel because he was a Democrat) brought the real-estate man Shire out to Oakland, and Shire saw his chance; moreover Holden met Shire's handsome daughter Florence that day; and though he had a wife and little girl of his own, a flame was kindled. Shire and Holden called on Zenas Wheelock, a pioneer and perhaps the most prominent citizen of Oakland; and after they had gone, the fine old patriarch shook his head. "I'm afraid," he said to his spinster daughter Martha, (her fiancé, along with Zenas' son Lyman, had been killed in the Custer Massacre), "I'm afraid we're in for a bad spell."

The bad spell began to develop. Shire bought land and built—not the "mansion" he promised, but a block of garish close-packed houses. Luke Holden was seen more and more in the company of Florence Shire, and tongues wagged. And even to Zenas' grandson Alan, son of the bookworm widower Harris Wheelock, trouble came: An attractive boy from New York, Ray Norcross, had plainly made an impression on Blanche Holden. After Ray had gone, Blanche was caught in school writing a letter to him, and punished for it. To show his sympathy Alan sold his treasured cigarette-pictures and with the proceeds bought for Blanche a little silver "friendship ring."

A climax came at the housewarming which Shire gave with much ostentation and champagne. Holden conspicuously neglected his wife Nannie for the company of Florence Shire at that gaudy party. And even when Nannie was taken seriously ill he allowed her to go home without him. And—next morning Mrs. Holden died. . . .

A scant year later Florence Shire and Holden were married. Blanche stayed with her beloved friends the Wheelocks for a time; but when her stepbrother was born, she proved all too useful as a nursemaid, for the second Mrs. Holden was eager to resume the gayeties of life. . . . It was not long afterward that Holden found himself in financial difficulties because of an unprofitable stone-quarry in which he was interested, and went to Shire for help. The real-estate man advised him to develop or sell a piece of land between Holden's house and the Wheelocks, sold to Holden cheaply by Zenas Wheelock in order that Nannie might have a garden, with the verbal agreement that it was not to be built upon. (*The story continues in detail:*)

LARGELY through Shire's efforts the additional capital required by the quarry company in which Luke Holden was interested had been found; nevertheless the beginning of the New Year saw the finances of the corporation in worse condition than before.

Though Blanche was almost eighteen, and would in three years inherit the few thousand dollars left her by her mother, Luke, who had charge of the estate, never spoke to her about it, nor about his own affairs; but Blanche had overheard enough of his talks with Florence to be aware of his difficulties, and she was not surprised when one March evening he came home looking more haggard than usual and announced the failure of the company.

The widespread interest evoked by this novel is in part due to its vivid picture of swiftly changing Chicago. But even more deeply interesting are the people of the story. No one of the characters mirrors any real person; yet each is a definite and very-much-alive individual such as only an artist of Julian Street's high gifts could ever create.

"You'll get some of your money back, wont you, when things are settled up?" Florence asked him.

Gloomily he shook his head.

"Does Papa lose what he put in, too?"

"No, I do. He lent it to me."

"Well, I'm sure he'll be nice about it," Florence said.

"Oh, very nice!" he returned ironically. "I'm giving him seven per cent interest, and he has my house and lot for security."

When a few days later Luke announced his intention of taking Florence and the baby South for several months, Blanche was astonished. Succeeding immediately upon a heavy loss, a long vacation did not seem consistent, especially in a man who cared as much for money as he did; but Blanche had discovered before this that the world is a strange place and that the ways of man are paradoxical, so she did not waste time in puzzling over the matter.

The baby, unaccustomed to being cared for by Florence, would miss Blanche, and certainly she would miss the baby. He would soon be three; ever since he was born she had been his nurse, and she knew the profound love that comes of service given. She tried, however, to console herself by thinking of the happy hours she would spend with Martha Wheelock, to whom of course she would go, as usual; nor did she learn until the day before her father and Florence were to depart that they had other plans for her.

It was Florence who told her. Blanche had put the baby in his crib and was folding dresses preparatory to moving, when her stepmother, partly clothed, came into the room and asked what she was doing.

"Getting ready to go next door."

"You're not going to the Wheelocks'," Florence informed her.

"I'm not?"

"No, you're going to Mamma."

"But your mother doesn't like me."

"Well," returned Florence coolly, "we've asked her, and she says she'll take you this time. Come and help me lace my corset, will you?"

Blanche moved toward her.

"But Florence—"

"Listen," the other broke in, handing her the ends of the long corset-laces, "there isn't going to be any argument about this. You'll do what your father says—and he says you're *not* to go to the Wheelocks' and you *are* to go to Mamma." Having delivered



"Listen," the other broke in, handing her the corset-laces, "there isn't going to be any argument about this."

this ultimatum, she raised her chest, compressed her waist with encircling fingers, and in a breathless tone commanded: "Now—pull!"

When Martha Wheelock heard the news she was perplexed and disappointed, but there was one person who was pleased. Ray Norcross was glad that Blanche was going to the Shires'. Though he knew the members of the Wheelock family, and though his relations with Alan continued, outwardly at least, to be amicable, he sensed in them a certain lack of cordiality which would have made it awkward for him to see Blanche as often as he wished, had she remained for a long time their guest. Florence, he knew, liked him; she had told him so, and as they became better acquainted, had added a suffix to his name, calling him, familiarly, "Raydy." At the Holdens' house he had occasionally met Mrs. Shire, and luckily had flattered her, saying he couldn't believe she was Florence's mother. He would be welcome there.

"Of course I'm sorry you're disappointed," he said to Blanche when, meeting him that afternoon, she told him where she was to go, "but as far as I'm concerned, I'm glad. I imagine the Wheelocks haven't much use for me, but I get on famously with Mrs. Shire."

"Well, I'm going to try to," she said.

"It's easy enough to do," he assured her with a reminiscent smile. "The old girl loves to be jollied along."

"I'm afraid I'm not very good at jollyng," she reflected aloud.

"Then you ought to read Chesterfield. My father is pretty smooth—architects have to be—and when he gave me Chesterfield to read, I saw where he got a lot of his ideas about handling people."

"But," she asked, "doesn't it make you sort of uncomfortable to say things you don't mean?"

"Not a bit. It's fun to say things you don't mean and see how people act, and sometimes it's fun to say things you do mean and have them wonder whether you mean them or not. You see," he went on, "I'm going to be an author, and authors have to study human nature. You can't write about the human animal unless you understand him."

"I suppose that's true," she mused aloud.

NEXT day the family left, and that evening in her room at the Shires', Blanche tried to bury herself in her school work and forget her loneliness; but she felt strange and restless, and her thoughts kept turning hungrily to the baby and to their room at home. This room that Mrs. Shire had given her was twice as large as her room in her father's house and she supposed most people would think it nicer, but she didn't like the reddish-pink of the walls, or the green velour curtains at the windows, or the massive golden-oak furniture, or even the chandelier with its three glittering bulbs—though she knew that Mr. Shire had recently installed electric light at great expense because it was the very latest thing.

The room felt cold. She moved over and laid her hand on the gilded radiator by the window to assure herself that the steam was on. Radiators were ugly things, but they sent the heat where you wanted it to go when it was windy. Finding the warmth agreeable, she stood there for a time looking out upon the blustering night.

By day the lake was visible from this window, but now she only felt it out there, cold and ominous, lashed by a gale that came in savage gusts, pelting the window-pane with icy particles; the iron street-lamp on the corner stood like a sentinel frozen at his post, with the snow drifting about his knees; across the



narrow circle of light, flakes small and hard as grains of rice went swirling and instantly were lost in the black, angry night.

No doubt the baby was now asleep in his warm Pullman berth. Blanche had never slept in a Pullman. She wondered what it was like. She'd enjoy traveling. . . . Palm trees.

Her reverie was interrupted by Robert, the colored butler, announcing that Ray was downstairs.

Blanche looked at the clock. "Why, it's nearly ten," she said. "Young gemman say he very sorry, but he want to see you most particular," explained the negro with an apologetic little smile, and she followed him down.

Ray was standing near the suit of armor in the oaken hall, his ulster wet with melting snow. On sight of her he slipped out of the heavy garment and flung it over the arms of a chair.

"I've got some wonderful news," he cried, "and I couldn't wait to tell you." As she led the way to the parlor, he ran on: "I wouldn't be surprised if I broke into print pretty soon. Shelley published a book of poems while he was still at Eton, you know, and I believe that if a man has the gift, things are bound to work

around so that he gets a chance to express what's in him. I went out to the World's Fair grounds this afternoon to watch them working on the buildings, and entirely by chance I got talking to a man who turned out to be an editor. I showed him the first verse of a poem I happened to have with me, and he said he might use it in his magazine. Isn't that great?"

"Splendid! What magazine is it?"

"It's called *Twilight*," he replied as they sat down. "It's a new magazine and this man—Bosworth's his name—is very artistic. I've been working on the poem this evening and I hope to take it to him in a day or two."

"What's it about?" she inquired innocently.

"I wasn't going to tell you until it's done," he said, "but—well, it's about you." He was watching her intently.

"About *me*?" She was half-incredulous. "Why, what could you possibly—"

"I have it here—what there is of it," he broke in, drawing from his pocket a sheet of yellow paper.

"Oh, read it to me!"



"It's a mistake! My father's away. Who told you to do it?"

"I call it 'To Blanche,'" he announced, unfolding the paper, and slowly he read:

"Fragile, fine and lily-fair,
Lightly tripping down the stair,
Comes serene with queenly air,
My Lady Blanche.

"Eyes that sparkle like the night,
Starred with constellations bright,
Soft and deep and all alight,
My Lady Blanche.

"Blooms from which the wild bee sips
Suffer a complete eclipse
When compared with your sweet lips,
My Lady Blanche."

"Oh, it's lovely!" she murmured.

"A man writes best when he feels most deeply," he said in a low voice, whereat Blanche flushed and looked away.

"You don't mind my saying that?"

Fingering the fringe of a green velvet table-cover, she shook her head.

"Blanche!" He seized her hand, lifted it to his lips and kissed it; then dropping it abruptly, leaped to his feet and moved with rapid steps to the hall.

Disturbed, she hastened after him, asking:

"Why, what's the matter?"

"Don't ask me!" He snatched his hat and ulster from the chair, opened the front door and rushed down the steps.

"Ray!" she called after him. "Ray, put on your coat!"

On the sidewalk he paused for an instant, and waving the garment like a banner, looked back at her; then, leaning into the storm, he was gone.

With the cold wind beating about her she stood in the doorway, staring at the place where he had been. How strange of him to have come so late and to have rushed away like that! And going out into the storm without his coat—it was madness!

Chilled, she turned back to the hall and closed the door. There was but one way to explain it. Ray must be, as his mother so

often said, a genius. He always smiled deprecatingly when he heard her make the declaration, but it must be true. No one but a genius would have acted like that.

"Why, he might get pneumonia!" she told herself with a little shudder as she started slowly up the stairs.

Reaching the landing, she stood for a time listening to the tempest as it battled with the window-panes.

"Yes," she said to herself, visioning the brilliance of his dark eyes, and the quick play of expression over his face, "that must be it. He's a genius, and he needs somebody to look after him."

Chapter Seventeen

AWAKENED next morning by the whistling of the gale and the volleying of sleet against the windows, Blanche was for a moment startled by the strangeness of the room, but the raw pink walls and violent green draperies, cold in the early light, promptly told her where she was. For three months she must stay here. Three months without the baby. She could picture him this morning in his berth, fascinated by the rocking of the car and by the scenery whirling past. What did he see from the window, she wondered. Were they far enough south to have run into sunshine and warm weather? A vision of palm trees on a golden shore glowed upon the curtain of her mind, and with the swiftness of a changing lantern-slide was gone, giving place to a picture of Ray as she had seen him last night waving his coat in the icy wind.

As she dressed she continued to think of Ray, hoping the mad performance had not made him ill. She wished she could find out; and a glow of happiness came over her as suddenly she realized that she could. Why, of course! The Norcrosses, no less up-to-date than the Shires, though less talkative about it, had recently installed a telephone. She hastened down to the coat-room, consulted the little telephone-book, cranked the fantastic instrument and gave the number to the operator. Presently a maid answered; she wasn't sure, she said, whether Mr. Ray was up yet; while she went to inquire, Blanche waited; then came Ray's voice over the electric wire.

"I just wanted to find out if you are all right," she explained.

He gave a little laugh. "I haven't been awake long enough to find out. Why shouldn't I be all right?"

"Rushing off without putting on your coat—it worried me."

"Worry about me a lot, you sweet thing!" he cried gayly. "I love it! Seeing you last night was just what I needed. It was an inspiration to me! Do you realize you were acting out my poem as you came down?" And without waiting for an answer he quoted:

"Lightly tripping down the stair,
Comes serene with queenly air,
My Lady Blanche—"

"I sat up most of the night and finished the poem," he continued, "and today I'm going to take it down to Mr. Bosworth."



"Oh, I shouldn't have disturbed you so early!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, you should! Any time's a good time to hear from you. Do you know you've got a perfectly lovely voice? I used to know an English girl that had one of those 'cello voices, and I was crazy about her—that is, for a while." He paused and when she did not speak, added significantly: "I guess you know who I'm crazy about now, don't you?"

She felt herself blushing and did not know what to say.

"Well, don't you?" he demanded. But at this juncture, the coat-room door suddenly opened, and Mr. Shire bustled in.

"Oh," he said, "you're here, are you? I was wondering where you were. Your breakfast's getting cold."

Thinking he had come for his coat and hat and would quickly depart, she waited, but he continued:

"Sorry to interrupt. I have to telephone my office."

Intending to explain to Ray, Blanche turned to the instrument, but as she opened her lips, she heard his voice.

"What's the matter?" he demanded in an irritated tone.

Mr. Shire had taken his overcoat from a hook, and Blanche felt it brushing against her back as he struggled into it. "I'm in a hurry," he announced crisply over his shoulder, and simultaneously the receiver spoke.

"Look here, I haven't had my coffee yet! Do you expect me to stand here like this all morning? Are you dumb?" And before she could answer, the jingle of the telephone bell told her Ray had rung off.

He was annoyed with her. Naturally he couldn't understand. She had stood there like a ninny. Why hadn't she quickly told him that Mr. Shire was waiting? It was stupid of her, but when it came to making explanations, she was always stupid. She hated explanations, and knowing that the aversion often made things more difficult for her in the end, she had tried to overcome it, but in vain. Now, unless she chanced to meet Ray, she would have to ring him up again or else write him a note, and that would seem, somehow, to lend undue importance to the episode.



"You know how much we all love you, Blanche. This doesn't make the least difference about that."

She had no appetite for breakfast, and after drinking her coffee put on her hat and coat, took up her books and left the house. Though it had stopped snowing, the wind continued to howl in from the lake, blowing icy particles into her face and tussling with her as she turned the corner; but by the time she reached school it had abated. During the morning the sun appeared and the classroom became uncomfortably warm. Registers were closed and windows lowered; from outside came a steady sound of dripping from eaves and cornices, and when school let out, the gutters were running with slush and little lakes had formed at the street-crossings. In the space of a few hours the fickle Chicago climate had turned winter into spring.

That afternoon Blanche sat close to her bedroom window, her eyes frequently turning from her schoolbook to the street. Ray had said he was going to take his poem downtown today, and she hoped to intercept him on his way to or from the station; but darkness fell without her catching sight of him. She wondered what the editor had said about the poem and if Ray would let her know. Throughout the evening she was on the alert for the ring of the telephone or the doorbell, but neither of them sounded, so before going to bed she wrote him a note of explanation. Next morning, however, she decided not to send it; surely she would meet him somewhere, and even if she didn't, she would see him on Saturday night, for they had an engagement to go together to the amateur dramatics at the club.

Saturday night arrived without her having heard from him. After supper she dressed and sat waiting in her room, where presently came to her the booming note of the hall clock striking eight. He ought to be here now. The minutes dragged by. At a quarter past eight she started toward the stairs, thinking to be

ready on the instant he should come, but at the head of the flight she stopped, arrested by the voices of Mr. and Mrs. Shire floating up from below. She didn't want to wait down there with them. It would make her too ridiculous if—for the first time she acknowledged to herself the fear that had been lurking in the background of her mind—if Ray should fail her.

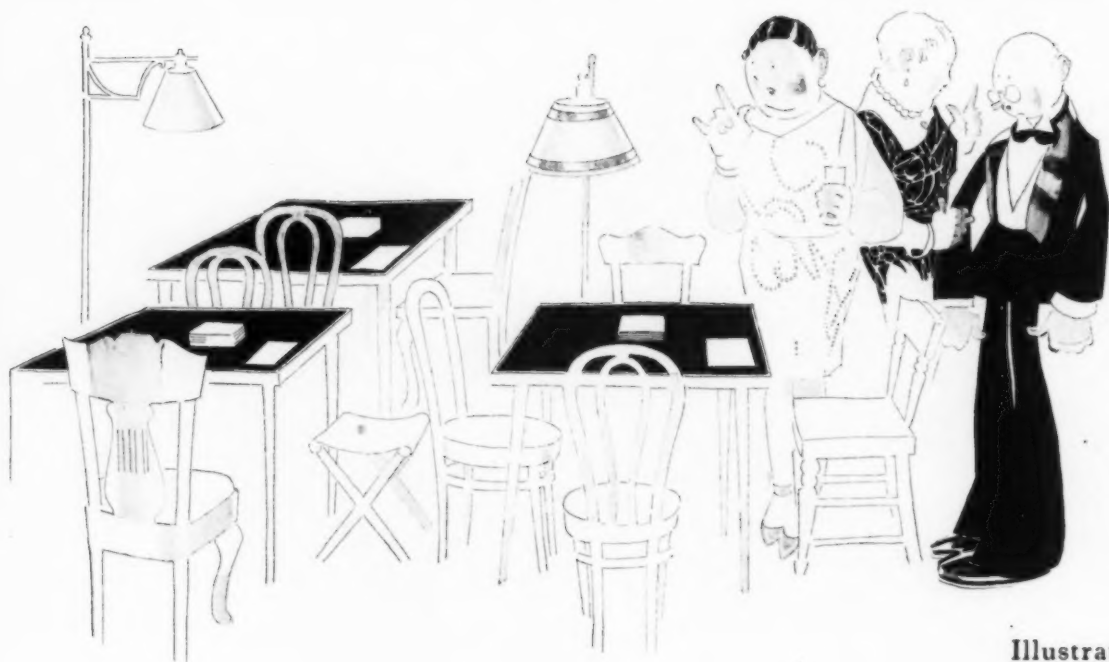
Returning to her room, she paced the floor, her ears straining for the first sound of the doorbell. By now the audience would be assembling at the club and soon the curtain would go up. They would be late. Even if he should come at once, they would be late. Perhaps he was running up the steps at this instant. Perhaps he was reaching for the bell. But the bell did not ring, and suddenly she knew Ray wasn't coming for her. He was angrier than she had allowed herself to believe. She should have sent that letter! Oh, dear, why hadn't she sent it right away!

Had he stayed at home tonight, she wondered, or gone to the dramatics? Maybe he had taken some one else. She wished she knew. She wished she knew where he was, what he was doing.

If she'd known Ray wasn't coming, she could have asked to go with the Wheelocks. He might have let her know! Perhaps Aunt Martha wasn't going, though, and in that case Alan would have felt he had to take her. She wouldn't have wanted to ask that of him—not as things stood now.

As things stood now—what exactly did she mean? How did things stand now? Sensible of a change in her relations with Alan, she had not before attempted to define it. Had it been an abrupt change, like this misunderstanding with Ray, she would have been compelled to face it and worry about it; but it had developed gradually, almost imperceptibly, like the turning of the seasons.

The change hadn't affected their friendship, she told herself. Their friendship didn't depend upon their continually seeing each other; it was too old and deep for that; they always resumed where they left off, however wide the gap between their meetings; but nowadays the gaps were often big. (Continued on page 168)



Illustrated
by
John Held, Jr.

Mr. Peters Holds the Bridge

By Robert Benchley

Here that saturnine and much-trying reformer Walter Peters of Dyke, Ohio, is dragooned by his stern creator Mr. Benchley into attending a bridge-party. And heaven doesn't help that ill-fated bridge-party either, for the relentless Mr. Peters unostentatiously forms a Vigilance Committee of one, and—at once proceeds to work his Machiavellian will.

MR. PETERS went to the front window of his home in Dyke and looked out at the black night which was throwing sashes of rain against the window-pane.

"I'm glad I don't have to go out on a night like this," he said. If he had been a funny man, he would have said: "God pity the sailors at sea on a night like this!" and Mrs. Peters, being a funny man's wife, would have laughed weakly. But Mr. Peters was not very funny; so he let it go at the unimaginative statement outlined above. And Mrs. Peters, being equally practical, said simply:

"But you do have to go out, Walter."

The best that her husband could do by way of retort was a low: "Where to?"

"This is bridge-club night. We meet at the Plaisted's," was the explicit reply.

Mr. Peters sank into a chair.

"Can't you call up and say that I'm sick? Say that I've got rain."

"Don't act silly, Walter," said Mrs. Peters. "And you'd better be getting ready, too. It's almost time to start."

Any paragraph here indicating that Mr. Peters went and got ready and that an hour later saw him and his wife at the Plaisted's would be superfluous for any married reader, and only harrowing for unmarried ones. We may jump, I think, directly to the meeting of the bridge-club.

The Plaisted's house had already taken on that strange, uninhabitable atmosphere which even the coziest of nests assumes when turned into a meeting-place for neighborly frolicking. Ordinarily a pleasant enough domicile, it seemed, under the disrupting influence of the bridge-club arrangements, to be furnished with chairs and pictures and hangings brought in from a storehouse, and the formal arrangement of green-baize-covered tables was suggestive of the utilitarian array of rented chairs at a fu-



neral. There was also a funereal hush over that portion of the membership which had already arrived and were sitting about uncomfortably talking in low tones about the terrible weather. One could see at the moment of entering that the preliminaries of a neighborhood party were well under way.

This hush was dispelled, however, by the arrival of the Redneys. Mr. Redney was known far and wide as the Life of the Party. "The minute George Redney comes into a room," the saying went, "things begin to pick up." George usually began "picking things up" while taking off his overcoat in the front hall.

"God pity the poor sailors at sea on a night like this!" he called out.

In the living-room this was taken up by Mrs. Wheatson and reported to the rest—who had heard it. "George says, 'God pity the poor sailors at sea on a night like this!'" There was general laughter.

"Greetings, friends, Romans and countrymen!" George continued, bursting into the room. "Are we all set for the big gambling session?"

And on being assured that everything was in readiness, he added enthusiastically, "Let's go!"—thereby making the offense complete.

The party having thus been officially started, Mr. Peters found



himself paired with Mrs. Weedon, a comparatively young matron with fuzzy blonde hair and a sweet voice. She had been considered quite a belle in her day—which was the day of the San Francisco earthquake. She still had several girlish traits, among them the mind of a girl of fourteen.

Their opponents were Mrs. Reese and Mr. Paddock, both good players and seasoned partners. Mr. Peters himself was what is known as an "adequate" player. Given his head, he would never play bridge at all.

"Who dealt this mess?" chirped his partner as she picked up the cards. There being no particular need for an answer, none was given. She had dealt them herself, turning up every sixth card with what she considered a pretty apology. Thus was the first hand begun.

It is not necessary to follow the hand play by play, nor the game hand by hand. The high-lights for Mr. Peters may be summed up as follows:

(1) Nine queries on the part of his partner as to the nature of trumps, each query followed by gay and increasingly disturbing giggles.

(2) Four brusque announcements, "The rest are ours," by his opponents, accompanied by a final and definite laying down of the hand. On examination this was always found to be a correct analysis of the situation.

(3) Three attempts to placate Lady Luck on the part of his partner by walking around her chair.

(4) Innumerable exclamations of "Good for you, partner!" from his opponents to each other.

(5) Six unsolicited confessions from his partner that she had "a hand like a foot."

(6) Considerable hard feeling engendered by the tardy discovery that his partner had been refusing spades with a ten-spot of spades in her hand, bringing forth an hysterical explanation that it was hidden in among her clubs, "which are black too, you know."

(7) A general air of smugness on the part of his opponents, made worse by the fact that it was quite justified by the turn of events.

(8) A practically continuous desire on the part of his partner to sing the first two lines of the chorus of "Always" while playing a hand, a desire to which she gave free rein.

(9) The fact that Mr. Peters seldom held any card higher than a jack.

(10) Eight delays, each finally ended by his partner with the mild exclamation: "Oh, did I take that trick!"

(11) An overwhelming dislike for the game of bridge on Mr. Peters' part.



When the time came for changing tables and partners, it seemed an auspicious moment for George Redney to entertain. During the playing he had carried on a running fire of table-to-table banter, usually with the table at the farthest end of the room. The nature of this comedy can best be indicated by such excerpts as:

"Hey, Luther, come over here and rescue me from a designing female!"

"Look, Mrs. Wheatson!"—holding up hand. "And we bid diamonds. Better come back to this table and stick to me. I'm a good provider."

"When do we eat?"

The entertainment between hands consisted of playing "Chopsticks" on the piano, practicing mashie-shots with Mrs. Goodman's umbrella, and doing an individual Charleston. All went over very big, except with Mr. Peters.

Mr. Peters was anxious for the party to proceed, as the faster it proceeded the sooner it would be over, according to an old superstition. But over in the corner there was a table which had not finished its last hand. The members of this group were earnest bridge-players and gave the thing quite a bit of serious thought. They stopped after each hand and went over the thing pretty thoroughly. From their corner, while the rest waited to continue the tournament, came sounds of careful and technical analysis:

"I led that ten-spot because I knew that he had a singleton in spades and I wanted to see how far I could go with my diamonds."

"All right. You were quite sound. But how were you planning to get the lead back into your hand?"

"I knew that Mrs. Freesh didn't have any more clubs. I also knew that my partner wanted me to lead diamonds in order to make her jack good. You see that, don't you?"

Mr. Peters walked over to the window. The rain had stopped. Quietly he tiptoed out of the room during the confusion incident to George Redney's slipping and falling while elaborating his Charleston act. He would have liked to stay and see if by any lucky chance George had been seriously hurt, but he had other business to attend to.

Mr. Peters' absence was not noticed until the technicians at the corner table had finished their game, and, by the time any serious alarm had been expressed or a general search instituted, he was back. "I had to run downtown to meet a man," he explained. Which satisfied everyone except Mrs. Peters, who remembered only too well certain occasions when her husband had remorselessly taken the law into his own hands.

Mr. Peters' next partner was Mrs. Colonel Raffien, a large lady of considerable standing in the community. Mrs. Colonel Raffien had been one of the analytical players and took great pride in her score-card, which presented an impressive appearance already.

Mr. Peters, who was, as we have said, an "adequate" player, became, under the embarrassing partnership with Mrs. Colonel Raffien, something less than adequate. He grew nervous and forgetful. He played out of turn. He gave what purported to be serious consideration to each play and then not infrequently played the wrong card. And each time that he slipped, Mrs. Colonel Raffien took cognizance of it.

At first she merely looked mildly surprised. Then she uttered

little sharp noises. And finally the thing became more than she could bear and she pointed out to Mr. Peters just where he had made his mistakes. She pointed them out in a manner that in some less civilized communities than Dyke would have marked her for an assassin's bullet.

But fortunately an assassin's bullet was not necessary. Scarcely had the third hand been played when there was a furious ringing at the front doorbell, accompanied by a pounding at the kitchen door.

Mr. and Mrs. Plaisted jumped up from their tables, and the maid ran screaming into the cellar. Mr. Peters chose that moment to beckon to his wife to take her wraps and follow him through the door opening on the garden.

"Open the door in the name of the Law!" came a harsh voice from the front porch, and suiting the action to the word, three large policemen pushed open the door and crowded into the hallway. At the same moment two even larger policemen and a plain-clothes man wormed their way in at the swinging door from the butler's pantry.

Mr. George Redney, who, of all people, knew how to take a joke, immediately saw through the prank and made a vicious lunge at the first policeman, calling out: "Stand back, villains! We will never give up the ship."

At the word "*ship*," George was made the recipient of one heavy-knuckled smack on the bridge of his nose which placed him quietly at rest over the back of a chair. It was, it seemed, a real policeman.

"Search the house, boys," said the plain-clothes man. "And youse all stay right where I tell yer," he added to the members of the party.

"This is an outrage," said Mr. Plaisted. "We are all respectable citizens here and you have no right to enter my house like this!"

"No right, eh?" said the spokesman of the Cossacks. "Found anything, boys?"

"Nothing but as pretty a little lay-out as you ever see," reported one of the searchers, entering from the music-room across the hall. With him he bore one roulette-wheel, a baccarat outfit, and a handful of dice. His assistant followed with three or four bottles of something labeled "*Old Judge Whisky*," together with various other odds and ends of illicit merchandise of sinister appearance.

"Just a good little crowd of respectable citizens," commented the detective, with a leer at Mrs. Colonel Raffien. "It's about time that the big boys in this game got shown up. Come on, all of you! Names and addresses!"

"Those things do not belong in this house," said Mr. Plaisted in a hysteria. "I have never seen them before. Some one has put them there

while we were playing bridge in here."

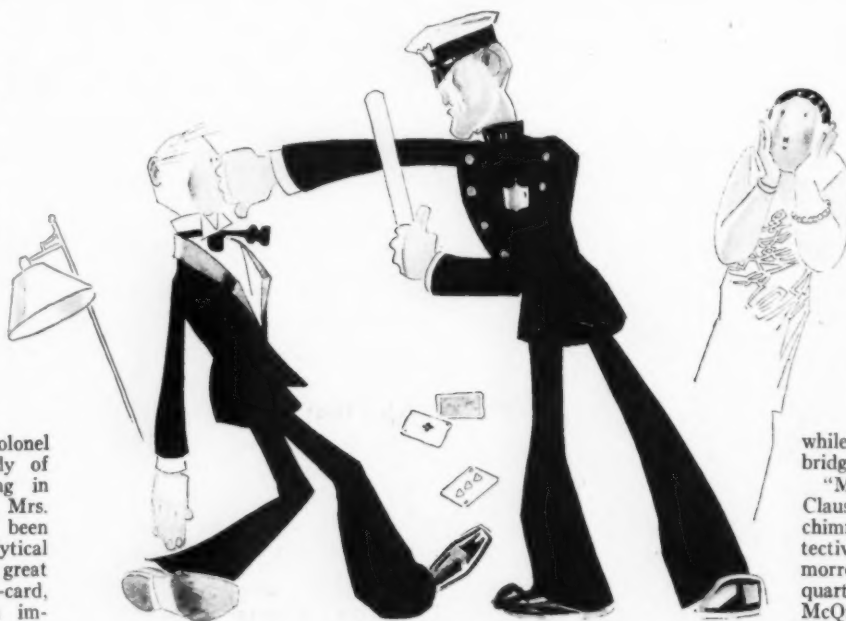
"Maybe it was Santa Claus come down the chimney," said the detective. "Nine o'clock tomorrow morning at Headquarters, and tell Judge McQueen."

Judge McQueen was lenient. In fact, the case

was hushed up very effectively, owing to the prominence in city politics of several of the accused. But the bridge-club was by common consent disbanded, and Mr. Peters had made his point.

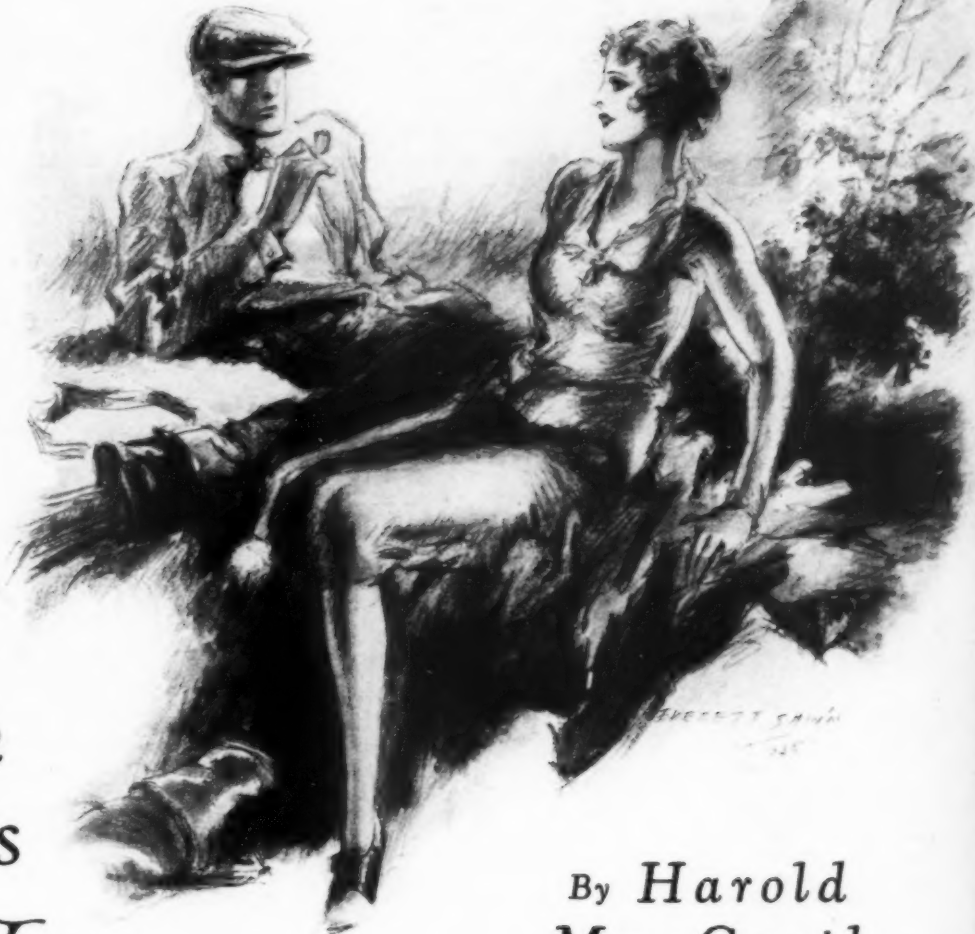
"I'm so glad that you didn't kill anybody, Walter," said Mrs. Peters, as she thought it over.

Mr. Peters rubbed his hands together meditatively. "It isn't too late yet," he murmured.



Illustrated by
Everett Shinn

"Ronny, I didn't believe you had the nerve," she declared, getting up.



These Things Will Happen

By Harold
Mac Grath

Harold Mac Grath would rather spend June on Lake Como—almost—than in his own lovely American garden, fenced in as it is with great flamboyant peonies. Because of his love for the Italian lakes he tells this story against the background of one of the loveliest of them all—a spot that is becoming increasingly familiar to Americans as the traveling hordes mount up.

SUPPOSING you loved two girls? I mean, that you idolized them both, that when you were with the one you were transcendently happy, that when you were with the other you were gloriously happy? There's no formula to go by, no rules. You love two girls and would give ten years of your life to know which you love the better, which one you really want to marry, and you simply cannot tell which.

Supposing you knew that both girls liked you? Nothing which you could designate as love, to be sure—a way, perhaps, of choosing you at dances, at golf. If one of them had shown a preference for another man, there would have been no difficulty at all.

This was Ronald Wynn's absurd condition. He wanted one of them as desperately as he wanted the air he breathed; but he could not tell which, study them both as he might. He had a vague notion that his brain had turned upside down and that his trouble could be attributed to this phenomenon. But aside from

his puzzlement over these two girls, everything else was entirely normal.

Nancy Brandon's hair was blonde, the raw-silk kind, and quite as fine and crinkly in texture. Ronny, as he was called, loved to watch it on a windy day when they were on the links or in his car. He loved to watch her beautiful hands tuck away again and again the rebel strands. A beautiful hand, strong, capable and most tantalizing; for whenever it moved in his direction, he desired to kiss it. When a man wants deliriously to kiss a woman's hand, he is in a serious condition.

Her eyes were blue. The moment you looked into them, there was no doubt as to their color; they were perfectly blue. Have you ever seen the Bay of Naples on a brisk afternoon? That kind of blue. Her complexion was of imperishable mother-of-pearl: when she grew old to seventy, there would be pearl tints. It never tanned or freckled. She was an amateur musician, loving

Chopin as Wynn did; and when she sang, she sang the old-fashioned melodies he liked best.

She had the bodily vigor of a cat; but like a cat, she wasn't always exploiting it. She could do eighteen holes at the country club without flopping into a chair when she returned to the veranda. She had a rapierlike wit, but struck kindly. She danced so lightly that it was only by looking into her face occasionally that you were able to realize that she was in your arms. She had moral and physical courage. She was beautiful and only twenty-four.

THAT should have been quite enough for any man, ordinarily.

But there was Dora MacGill. Her hair was like spun ebony, if there could be such a thing, full of rebel strands which a pair of beautiful hands were always tucking under her hat, on the links or in Ronny's car. He wanted to kiss these hands too. But if he really loved Nancy, how could he kiss Dora's hands? Her eyes were gray, like a Highland fog drifting over the sea. She was always tanned; there was always color in her cheeks. When she entered a room, she always brought into Ronny's mind the thought of heather and west winds. She hunted, fished, rode, golfed; and when you danced with her, you wanted the music to go on forever. She too was witty but kindly, and she played Chopin with all the fire of De Pachmann in his forties. She was beautiful and twenty-four.

Mightily contrasted by nature, the two of them; and yet Ronny loved them both with all the soul of him.

Perhaps pathology should step in here and elucidate. But what the deuce does pathology know of love?

Now, there is this fact: if you grow accustomed to two people, you lose the sense of contrast; and Ronny had grown up with these two adorable girls.

Loving two women is no novelty. *Vide* the morning newspapers. A man loves these attributes in one woman, those attributes in another, and he is perfectly logical if not lawful.

Ronny dared not tell Nancy he loved her, for the fear that he really loved Dora; and vice versa. Tragedy, pure tragedy; and yet our town, which saw the situation, covertly laughed in its sleeve.

When Ronny was with Nancy, he was absolutely certain. Yet if at that moment Dora appeared upon the scene, the fog fell down upon him again. When any other man showed Dora or Nancy marked attention, Ronny permitted *Othello* to enter the abode of his being. Frequently he started flirtations with other girls. Neither Dora nor Nancy showed the least jealousy. Terrible, when you think it over.

He was an eligible bachelor, with a net income of twenty-odd thousand a year. He was good-looking and sturdily built. He lived with his mother, a jewel of a woman, beautiful in her fifties and full of applicable wisdom; Wynn Senior had died years before. She was one of those rare women who become famous without apparently anything to become famous for. She neither wrote nor painted nor played nor inherited political grandeur and aristocratic lineage. Yet people ran to her as water runs to the fall. She knew human nature, all sides of it, was serene in turmoil whether it came from within or was set upon her: a mind which could grasp and analyze all things with an aloofness born of a great soul. She had mighty friends across the world—her war work; but she never used these friends. Over all, she had the gift of humor.

She knew Ronny's predicament. But even she, with all her wisdom, could not tell which girl her boy loved better. For herself, either would have pleased her; she loved them both.

"Ask one of them," she advised.

"How can I, when I don't know? That's the damnable thing about it. I don't love Nancy any more than I love Dora."

"You've been working too hard. You have written so many plays that you have automatically stepped upon the stage, and your existence is imaginative rather than real. Go abroad alone for a while. Travel may clear the fog from your mind. Go to Bellagio, the old Villa Serbelloni, and at the end I will join you. You are stale with old scenes. Write a new play for this young Ann Sterling you think so fine an actress."

"Do you believe I'm fickle?"

"No, Ronny. But I believe if you saw neither girl for a while, you might get a true perspective. Queer as it may seem, I believe you love them both and that you would be happy with either."

"Travel—" mused the son. But the secondary thought was that some other fellow might step in while he was away, and it distressed him.

That night he went to a dance with Dora, and the first tune the orchestra struck up was: "What'll I Do?"

"Ronny, don't squeeze me so hard," panted Dora.

"It's that tune. I hate it."

"Let's sit it out, then."

"But I'd rather dance."

Dora laughed. They whirled on, passing Nancy, who waved her hand.

These two girls were the best of friends. That was one of Ronny's terrors. If he proposed to one, the other would immediately hear of it: and then, if he proposed to the wrong one, he would never dare propose to the right one. It was therefore nothing surprising that his mental condition was in a precarious state.

He wasn't making an ass of himself publicly. His friends only guessed at his muddled mentality. He was too much the playwright to blunder. He had some tolerable good cover, too. Other chaps took Dora and Nancy to amusements. There was Charley Johnson. He took Nancy and Dora to dances almost as often as Ronny did; and Ronny disliked him exceedingly—for no other reason. For Johnson was likable.

He was a millionaire, and wasn't the least interested in the Follies girls when they came to town. He was neither a he-vamp nor a mollicoddle, and by long odds the most popular man in town. Ronny knew that his dislike was not justifiable, and that too embittered him, because he was just. Johnson had the habit, however, of jumping in and asking Dora or Nancy to go somewhere five minutes before Ronny decided to do the same thing. If he called up Nancy and learned that she was going with Charley, Ronny dared not ask Dora for the fear that she'd find out that he had already asked Nancy. If Johnson had "rushed" either of the girls, it wouldn't have been so bad; but to all appearances he played the same game as Ronny.

ONE afternoon on the links Ronny and Dora, followed by Johnson and Nancy, made the rounds of the course. Dora and Ronny sat down at the ninth hole, not caring particularly whether they made the eighteen in ninety or not. Charley and Nancy were not so leisurely, and soon passed the other two, jesting and laughing.

"Well?" said Dora.

"What? Oh!"—apologetically. Ronny ran his fingers through his hair.

"You wanted to talk." She spoke with an irritability that astonished him.

Was she jealous because he had stared intently at Nancy? He came very near proposing, knowing in his soul that he would be very happy with Dora—that is, if Nancy married and moved out of town. All very clear, isn't it?

"I saw your mother downtown this morning," said Dora. "She's the darlingest thing!"

"I wish I had some of her good looks," replied Ronny.

"Piffle! I hate pretty men"—sending a look toward Charley Johnson, the handsomest chap in town.

"What do you want," asked Ronny, "—a cave-man?" He wished she'd keep her hands away from her hair!

"No," said Dora, "I want the everyday sort. I don't want a cave-man or a demigod. I shouldn't understand him and he wouldn't understand me."

"Dora, if you don't keep those hands away from your hair, I'll kiss them!"

With that mock-impulsiveness which was one of her charms, she deliberately thrust both hands toward him: and to her astonishment, he kissed them savagely.

"Ronny, I didn't believe you had the nerve," she declared coolly, getting up.

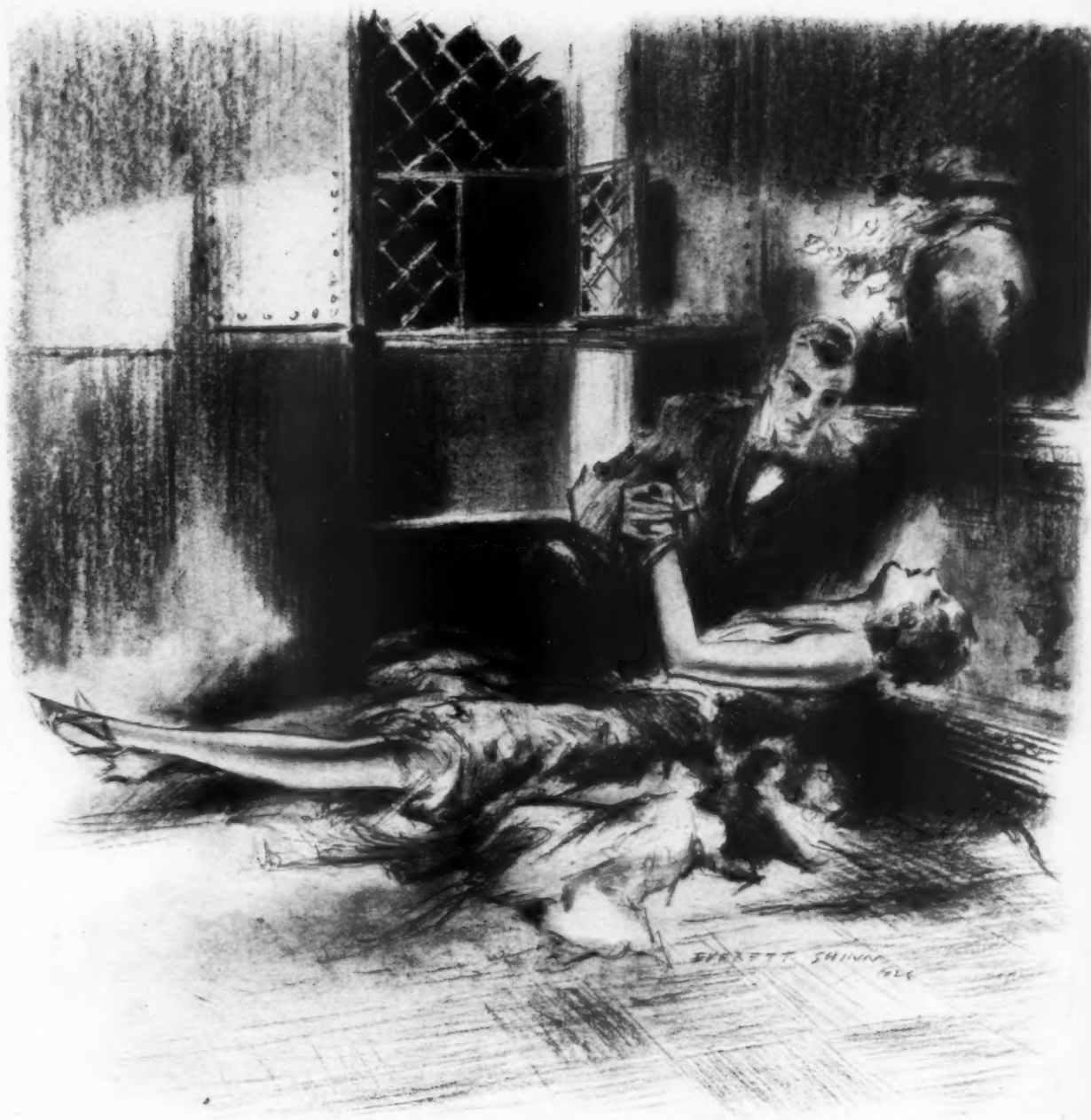
He got up too, with something in his head that hadn't been there before. Did he lack nerve? Was that it? But hang it all, she didn't know that he loved Nancy too. Oh, he saw the end clearly: for the fear of getting the wrong one, he was likely to lose both of them.

And all the way back to the clubhouse, he wondered what it was that Charley had said to Nancy to make her laugh. Nancy didn't laugh at ordinary twaddle. A joke, to get her mirth started, had to be pointed and plausible. Dora's laugh was just as easy and her ear just as critical.

"WHAT did you do it in?" asked Charley Johnson as he came out of the shower.

"Do what in?"—for Ronny had forgotten that there was such a thing as golf.

"The round, man, the round!"



She twisted out of his hands, limply, as half-unconscious persons often do.

"Oh," said Ronny, coming back to consciousness. "Ninety-eight."

"A man can't play golf with a pretty woman."

"Is that a poke at me?"—truculently.

"General. I made ninety-two against eighty-two yesterday with Judd. But Nancy's a peach."

"So's Dora."

"Ronny, what's the matter with you? You talk as if you wanted a fight. Didn't you get along with Dora?"

"Of course I did! How about a peg?" Ronny added diplomatically. He saw that he must begin to watch his step.

"My stuff," said Johnson.

"That's Jake with me," responded Ronny.

They had two pegs and only two words—"Here's how!" (Queer thing about that phrase; you can't say it over bottled pop.) It was after the second drink that Ronny noticed that Charley wasn't as gay after a drink as he usually was. In love with Nancy, and couldn't make a go of it? Certainly, Ronny decided, Charley was in no such mix-up as himself. Ronny Wynn was the only dumb-bell in the world who could love two girls at the

same time and with the same quality of love. He wondered if a European trip would help out.

"Going abroad this winter?" he asked, as he and his rival went out to the veranda.

"No. Sticking around this winter." It was now June.

"Uh-huh."

On the way home Ronny said to Dora: "Charley's a pretty good scout. I don't see why your dad always gets his hackles up when Charley's around."

"Charley loafs too much."

"What the dickens can a man do who has three millions?" Ronny wanted to know. "Would it mean anything?"

"He might manage his affairs instead of leaving them wholly in the hands of bankers and lawyers."

"And lose half of what he has!" was Ronny's comment.

"Charley knows he couldn't play that rôle successfully."

"Was it your Scotch or his?"

Ronny laughed.

"Ronny," she said, "I heard about the other night at the club. You went home squiffy. You're not that kind."

Heaven sent him wisdom
in that moment. He took
the young woman into
his arms and kissed her.

"I was blue, Dora—indigo blue."

"Why didn't you ring me up?"

"You'd gone with Charley to hear Levitski."

"And you didn't go?"

"Nobody to go with. Who tattled?"

"That's a nice question! You know just as well as I do what a scandal-mongering old place your club is, stewards and all. Dad told me, and wanted to know what the devil had got into you."

"The very thing—the devil. Dora, what would you do if I kissed you?"

"I shouldn't try it, Ronny. I'm old-fashioned."

"Then keep your hands away from your hair!"

She put down her hands. "Ronny, you've changed somehow."

"I used to kiss you when we were kids."

"You used to kiss Nancy, and the rest of them. Would Nancy let you kiss her now? What I mean is, your disposition is changing. You never used to be irritable."

"I'm sorry, Dora."

"Is it your work?"

"Maybe."

"I don't see why those two plays the stock company put on last year weren't grabbed. They were fine."

"Maybe that's the trouble."

"Well, you're fighting, anyhow."

"Good Lord, yes! If ever there was a man in the middle of a fight, it's Ronny Wynn."

The rest of the ride home was broken only by Dora's protests against speed.

Later in the week he drove Nancy home from the theater.

"Nancy, what would you do if I kissed you?"

"Both of us would be very sorry," she answered gravely and perturbedly.

Thus his experimental forages with each girl had come out the same way. They weren't the casual type; they were old-fashioned. The flapper surged and rolled by without affecting them. One didn't kiss either just because one happened to want to.

"What's got into you, Ronny? You never spoke like that before."

"But I have kissed you!"

"Oh, when I was a child. All the difference in the world now. Could you ever look me in the face again if you kissed me against my will?"

"Nancy, I was just trying you out."

"Ronny, that's a fib. Something's the matter with you. There's a devil got into you. Ask your mother to cast it out."

"Nancy, you're about the finest girl I know."

"And you are the nicest man, if only you'll behave yourself."

Ronny and his mother dined together the following night.

"I saw Nancy this afternoon," she said.

"Which do you like the better?" he asked.

She eyed him oddly. "I have no choice. Both of them are darlings."

Ronny threw up his hands in despair. "When you can't tell which you like the better, how the devil am I to?"

"The matter with you is self-hypnosis. A subconscious plot for a play has surely jumped into the wrong part of your head, and you can no longer differentiate. Dora and Nancy are as different as the poles, and you cannot see it."

"I love them both."

"That's nonsense. As daughters-in-law I see no difference, of course. It may be that you really love neither. Travel will tell the truth. Go to Europe for a few months. If you remain here in this frame of mind, you are bound to do something ridiculous."



I'll come later and meet you at Bellagio—the Villa Serbelloni."

"Oh, I sha'n't make an ass of myself. I'll go to Europe."

The mother smiled enigmatically. "And I'll meet you at Bellagio. . . . Como," she added, without speaking to her son. She had spent her honeymoon at Bellagio.

HE went about with the girls as usual. To the world his conduct was unchanged. But one happening bothered him considerably. Charley Johnson entered the bank he practically controlled, assumed the position of vice-president and sat at his desk from ten to three and actually transacted business. In other words, he was in love with either Dora or Nancy, which put an extra twist to Ronny's bewilderment. With all his cleverness, he could not pump anything out of Charley.

It now became torture to dance with either Dora or Nancy, to feel them in his arms, knowing that Charley loved one or the other. The fathers of both girls were against Charley on account of his idleness. Of course, now that Charley had gone to work, their attitude would change.

At the theater one night a queer notion came into Ronny's



head. Charley and Nancy and Dora and he were together, forming a theater party. The notion was to yell: "Fire!" And in the confusion Ronny believed he would be sure to fly to the girl he loved more. But of course he did not execute the notion; all might have been hurt, and Charley might have shown his hand and gone to the same girl as the instigator of the confusion.

Ronny was five feet nine, tough as briar, and pleasant to look upon when Charley wasn't around. He had no financial worries. His mother had her own income, and mother and son shared the household expenses. Aside from his dramatic labors—unsuccessful as yet in New York—he occasionally wrote a short story for one of the high-class magazines. His education was of a high order; he passed for a wit; but at present he knew that he was a moron of colossal dimensions.

In November he booked for Cherbourg without letting any of his friends know. His mother could be relied upon to keep quiet—with her enigmatic smile. He was to have a letter from her frequently, but there was to be no mention of either girl.

Self-hypnosis—he kept mulling over that. A plot which had stepped down to the lights without being asked. At some time

he had thought, nebulously, of writing a play about a chap in love with two girls. Not a bad theory. But how under the name of heaven was the discovery of the fact to help him? How was he to coax it back into the subconscious cavern? Another girl? He shuddered at such disloyalty.

He went to New York quietly. He told his mother that he would witness a play or two, especially that in which Ann Sterling had the star part. He was leaving a clear field for Charley Johnson, but that could not be helped. He had his future sanity to think of.

While in New York he almost surrendered to the impulse to consult an alienist. It occurred to him that the alienist would have diagnosed his case as double vision or as one heart that beat as two.

The first night in New York he went to see Ann Sterling, to learn that her vehicle was a flop and was to be taken off the day before he sailed. As he supped after the theater he thought over the script of his new play. It honestly seemed to him that it was just the sort of vehicle she stood in need of. But he knew the whole game to be a gamble. Nobody knew what the public

wanted, the New York theatrical manager less than anybody else. Ronny was not conceited; he was merely confident that he could write a good play. Horkheimer had advanced him five hundred the year before, and had only recently returned the play as unsuitable to his star, who, as everybody knew, was Ann Sterling. It had been a bitter blow; for of all the actresses, he admired Ann Sterling the most. She was a born *tragédienne* and *comédienne*; she could bring laughter upon the heels of tears.

THE second day out at sea was rough but sunny. There wasn't a soul on board Ronny knew. Suddenly he received a pleasurable shock. Ann Sterling was on board! She was with an elderly woman, probably her mother. Not on the passenger-list, because evidently she had come aboard the last minute; and he had not seen her in the dining-salon because no doubt she had a suite. When actresses travel, they rather like to lose their professional identity—some of them.

Ronny saw no reason why he should not present himself. So he wrote her a pleasant note, telling her of the Horkheimer incident and hoping he might have the pleasure of an interview. He received a return note, making an appointment at eleven the next morning on the boat-deck.

When he arrived, she was alone and motioned him to be seated, eying him with something like amused curiosity. She had read and liked "The Modern Note"—his play—but could not use it because it was a company rather than a star play.

"Have you tried it elsewhere?" she asked.

"No."

"Good gracious, why not?"

"I have fresher stuff in my mind."

"Are you writing anything?"

He confessed that he was. He explained that he was going to travel some, then settle down at the Villa Serbelloni and finish the 'scripts he was carrying with him.

"Are they in any shape to be read?" she inquired, still with her eyes filled with curiosity.

"I can read one of them, if it will not bore you."

"I came away," she said, "to escape all things theatrical. I refused to take plays to read on the trip. And now I'm bored stiff for the want of them. You know 'The Bird in Hand' went wrong. It seemed just what I wanted till we got into rehearsals. Please bring up the play this afternoon. What do you call it?"

"The Rebel Nightingale."

"Awfully good."

After the interview was over, and she was alone, she began to laugh. All in all, it was the drollest thing she had ever heard of. Still, she would see it through.

She liked the 'script so well that she made a dozen valuable suggestions which he made note of. He was so extraordinarily elated over this twist of fate that he forgot Dora and Nancy for several hours.

Her name was Ann Sterling Wallace. She might have been twenty-four. Her face was fine rather than beautiful. Her eyes and hair were brown, both turning to bronze in the sunshine. But it was her voice which enchanted him, a voice filled with bell-like notes, haunting. When she talked, it was like listening to a Chopin nocturne. He was strongly attracted, so strongly that he was determined to see as much of her as he could. She belonged to the world he was so eager to enter. Besides, contact with a woman of such charm might serve to turn his poor addled brain right side up.

She wouldn't be in Paris. She was going to visit friends at Chantilly, but would be in the city off and on during the month. So Ronny spent a month in Paris, breaking up his original plans. Of course he wrote to his mother about Ann, and his mother smiled enigmatically as she read the description of Ann, a description touched with literary fervor.

Ann was an independent creature, quite as capable of taking care of herself as was either Dora or Nancy. So they had tea several times in town, and they always talked shop. On board the ship he had attributed her interest in "The Rebel Nightingale" as an effort to escape boredom; but now he saw that she was honestly interested in the play.

To land a play through the usual outlets, agencies and managerial offices, he knew to be almost impossible. It did not matter in the least that one's play was a good one. But to interest a star in your wares: that was something like seeing the target even if you did not hit it. The trouble with Ronny was that his lack of success was due to his financial independence. He did not hawk his wares but left them in the hands of indifferent agents.

Ann declared that the first, second and fourth acts were in rehearsal shape. It was the third act that needed overhauling; and her professional knowledge and needs were of great help to him.

Of her professional life, from her first appearance to the latest, she gave him generous glimpses; but as to her home life she offered a blank wall. He never cast a fly in that direction, however; to be with her was enough; to hear her remarkable voice was sufficient. In her company, however, his thoughts were always more or less literary, though there were times when he wished he had met her before he had fallen into his present muddle with Dora and Nancy. Sometimes he caught Ann gazing at him oddly, with an expression not at all compatible with the situation. Then too, she often broke into laughter which apparently had no cause.

You understand, of course? The only possible way he could bestir the clogged dice in his head was to venture into new amatory avenues. His cure lay in the contact with pretty and attractive young women. In wandering about with Ann, he felt no disloyalty to Dora or Nancy. Perhaps if the dice-box was given a good jolt, the bewildering cube might roll back into his subconsciousness. He never spoke of the home girls to Ann; he was too clever for that. The more he thought it over, the more convinced he became that his mother's diagnosis was correct: that he had hypnotized himself with a plot which as yet had no business outside the incubator.

Ann, Dora and Nancy. He found himself comparing their merits; but always Nancy and Dora remained precisely where he had left them; their vivid and compelling outlines did not recede. He tried to fall in love with Ann, but couldn't; she drew him only in a literary way. What might have happened, had she remained in his vicinity, will never be known. Suddenly she took it into her head to run over to London to look at the new productions. She laughed as she got into the train for Calais; and he wondered what there had been to laugh at!

While in Paris he received three letters from his mother. Local news, with a number of clippings from the home newspapers, but never a word about Dora or Nancy. He slightly resented this, but he had no right to, since his orders had been to omit all mention of the two girls. Nevertheless the letters were horribly empty things.

But work is a great consoler. While in Nice he rewrote "The Rebel Nightingale." He rewrote it again in Florence. In Rome he buried it in his trunk and took out "I Promise to Pay," a farce-comedy.

He worked mornings, visited the galleries in the afternoon, and meandered about town alone at night, his thoughts upon Ann, Dora and Nancy. Three of them!

At length he wrote his mother to send him the society page of the Sunday newspapers. (That enigmatic smile must have stirred his mother's lips!) Of course he merely wanted to learn if Dora and Nancy were still going the social rounds—unattached. Perhaps there was in his mind the hope that one or the other would engage to marry some one else. That would have straightened out the kink. Bay of Naples eye—and sea-and-fog eye. He could not look at a strange woman tucking in her hair without having a flood of tender recollections! Mad as a hatter: he knew it!

HE arrived at the Villa Serbelloni, Bellagio on Como, the first week in May, and sighed with the relief of a man who has reached the top of a long hill. If the kink did not straighten out in this paradise, it never would. Rugged and tender, snow-caps and roses, the loveliest spot on all God's corrugated world. The Villa stands above the little town, on a promontory of inexpressibly beautiful terraces. One sits on the main terrace and watches the sun set on Lake Como and the moon rise on Lake Lecco, and believes in the gods: you are one.

For three or four days he loafed, drinking in the peace and beauty surrounding him. On the fifth day he got out the 'script of "The Rebel Nightingale" and went to work; at first doggedly, and then inspiredly. The world fell away from him, all his amatory troubles. He was an interested and happy man because he was a dozen characters; he lived and laughed and suffered with them. He recalled his own corporeal being only when he went to bed.

On the last Monday in May he had typewritten the four acts, and knew that it would not be touched again except at rehearsals, if he happened to be lucky enough to have it rehearsed.

Then he set to work in another direction, grimly. He wrote down all he knew about Dora and (Continued on page 161)



"Be care-ful," she said. "If they catch you, out you go."

IN the history of the American theater the names of famous vaudeville teams loom large—for a space. Then one member is caught up by the destiny called Success, exalted for a little day, then flung aside. And the public turns to a new favorite. Here, then, is the story of the lesser of such a

twain, a poignant, heart-searching tale out of the world of make-believe.

By

Mildred
Cram

The Feeder

Illustrated by R. L. Lambdin

THEY met in New Orleans. Joe Victor was crossing the square when he saw a tall, hungry-looking fellow in a shabby overcoat leaning against a lamp-post. At first Joe thought the man was drunk. "Or sick. Very sick," he added mentally. And then, because he was by nature soft-hearted, he took another turn around the park in order to pass that sagging figure a second time.

"Is there anything I can do?" he asked.

The fellow in the rusty overcoat lifted his head, gave Joe a queer look and then slipped down the lamp-post to the ground.

Joe Victor's first idea was to move along; it was none of his business. Besides, it was risky to offer sympathy to strangers.

Just then the man on the ground opened his eyes and sat up.

"I'm all right. Leave me alone," he said. Thereupon he got unsteadily to his feet and walked off. Joe Victor followed. There

was something touching and at the same time magnificent in the fellow. He was sick, no doubt of it. But there he was. He crossed the square and zigzagged toward the arcade, Joe Victor at his heels. And suddenly, collapsing, he sat down on the curb-stone and took his head in his hands.

Joe Victor spoke to him again:

"Anything I can do?"

"I think I'm starving," the other said.

"Can you get up?"

"Give me a hand."

They staggered along together.

"I live about two blocks from here," Joe said. "I've got half a cold chicken and some beer."

The big, awkward body jerked forward, so that it was the starving man who led, not the Samaritan. He mounted the stairs

to Joe's room at a run; he waited, panting, licking his lips, for the food.

"Give it to me! Give it to me!"

Joe Victor offered his visitor the only chair; he himself sat on the bed, staring with wide, bland eyes at the wolfish feeding of the other.

Never had Joe Victor seen half a chicken devoured, skin and all, with such rapidity. This man paid no attention to anything except the matter in hand. He wrenched, tore, licked, swallowed with a sort of maniacal frenzy.

"Haven't eaten for four days."

Joe Victor sat on the bed and stared. This was an unwieldy man, a man put together loosely, like a scarecrow. His feet were enormous; his ankles were loose; he did not sit upon the chair, but hung upon it like a sawdust man. He had a strange, bony face, deeply lined, yet innocent. Beneath thick brows his eyes were intensely blue, china blue. And his enormous mouth was flexible.

He finished, wiped his mouth on the back of his hand, sighed and, suddenly, smiled.

"I thought you said you had some beer."

JOE VICTOR leaped to his feet and rushed out to a saloon, where, as he was known to be an honest actor, they made him pay cash and gave him short measure. He hurried back along the Rue Royal—this was in the old French quarter, twenty years ago—with a strong, pleasant excitement, an unfamiliar tingling anticipation.

He found the hungry stranger lying on the bed, his shaggy head propped up, one hand dragging on the floor.

This was the beginning of their partnership, and of Joe Victor's servitude.

"Beer," Joe said briefly, offering the can.

The other drained it to the last drop and fell back upon the pillow.

"My name's Jo," he said.

"So's mine!" Joe Victor cried.

A look both mocking and superior passed through those china blue eyes. "It can't be. There are only two Joes in this country. The last name, not the first. Victor Jo. J-O. Now don't tell me you're another!"

Joe Victor shouted: "My name's Victor! Joe Victor! Can you beat it!"

The other smiled. It was as if he dismissed the Victors. "I'm Italian. Vittorio Giovannini. When I came over here, I shortened it. Victor Jo. Easy. No one can pronounce *Giovannini*. No one can spell it. I was a kid, fifteen, when I landed in New York. I'm thirty. I've been an American five years. Victor Jo. That's a good name."

He sat up. "Got a cigarette?"

Victor obliged. From a crumpled packet of cheap Virginians, Jo selected a smoke, inhaled deeply and lay down again, relaxed. He was like an empty suit of clothes.

"I'm an artist," he explained. "I've been with the White Top Circus. They fired me a month ago because I was too good."

"Clown? Rope? Trapeze?"

"Artist."

"I don't understand."

"Actor! Impersonator! Do you think I look like a fool?"

"No," Victor said. "I think you look like a scarecrow."

"See here!"

The other jumped off the bed, tossed the cigarette into the wash-basin, and stood first on one ankle, then on the other. He bent backward until he was taut as a bow; his thick hair swung away from his head and touched the floor. He straightened, collapsed again, and this time tied himself into a series of grotesque bowknots. He was double-jointed. No, he was boneless. He seemed to have no spine, to be a sort of fluid entity. He sat upon the floor and put his legs around his neck. He stood upon his head. He was as graceful, as graceless, as intangible and as silent as smoke.

He untied himself and threw himself again upon the bed.

"That is not by any means all," he assured Victor. "I was trained by my father, who was the most famous clown in Europe. He broke every bone in my body before I was five years old. He taught me pantomime, ballet—"

Jo broke off, shrugged. "But you don't understand."

"A little. I'm an actor."

"An actor?"

"Vaudeville. I'm a juggler."

"Well, I'll be damned! Why didn't you tell me so?"

Thus came to be the greatest team on the American stage, that ill-matched, irresistible, legendary, perhaps immortal pair of clowns—Victor and Jo.

Victor knew that he had happened upon a genius and shivered with amazed recognition of the miracle. It was almost too good to be true that he, Joe Victor, an obscure failure, should have stumbled upon this marvel. He heard the beating of invisible wings. Success, a word he had never dared to utter, trembled on the tip of his tongue. For he saw that this Vittorio Giovannini, this Victor Jo, was indeed an artist. He was more; he was unique among men. He was a double-jointed, spineless, inspired comedian. Years later, when the slang of the theater developed a pungent brevity of its own, he was referred to as a Wow.

All of this, Victor saw. He saw, too, that the scarecrow needed a prop, a backbone. Without regret, with a beautiful, a touching humility, Joe Victor became Victor Jo's spine.

They made their appearance in the midway of a Florida county fair. But first, Jo went to the theater in New Orleans where Victor was appearing four times a day. "Victor the Peerless Juggler—Never Misses."

Before a drop-curtain, upon a narrow, dirty stage, he juggled as if his life depended on it. He was conscious of that mocking, ugly face in the first row. He fumbled, missed, missed again. A little heap of broken plates and saucers was symbolic of his failure.

Afterward, in the saloon, where Jo ordered drinks at Victor's expense, the juggler heard, and accepted, the ultimate, damning criticism:

"You're good, but you're not good enough. You'll never get on the circuit. You haven't any humor. You're quick, but you're heavy."

Victor nodded. His round face was serious, and tears smarted behind his eyes. "I know. I'm rotten."

He never again juggled in Jo's presence. And he never explained, then or later, that he had been shaken out of his usual control by his very desire to succeed.

Jo reached for two tumblers, two bottles. "I'll show you." He sent them whirling over his head, an arch from hand to hand; he caught them, set them down, caught them up again. And all the while he sagged and collapsed and leaned and staggered and stood on his ankles and fell out of joint. Victor laughed until he cried; those stinging tears rolled down his cheeks, and he tasted the salt of them on his lips.

"You see!" Jo said, and never guessed that he had hurt the juggler, that he had twisted his heart and squeezed it and left it without hope.

Victor paid for the drinks.

Their first appearance was not a success. A handful of country people parted the tawdry, red cotton curtains to sit upon wooden benches facing an improvised stage made of packing-cases.

"This is the bottom," Jo said. "But we're going to climb to the top. New York! London! Paris! Vienna!"

Victor mopped his face to hide the doubt he knew must be written there.

A WHITE-HOT sky, glaring as a crystal, fitted over a steaming world of swamps and pitted roads and mangroves festooned with moss. The fair, a tangle of tents, booths, bunting, sawdust and peanut stands, sprawled across an open field, and the flowers of spring were trampled by the crowd. The midway became a morass littered with peanut-shells, paper bags and fruit-skins. Barkers shouted; pigs squealed; children piped upon penny whistles.

And here was created an immortal characterization. Here, upon a stage ten feet square, the Mary of Victor Jo made her ribald and excruciating first appearance. She was a pathetic hussy, the stuff all drabs are made of, part saint, part mother, part sinner and part shuddering mystery. She was universal, as easily recognized in Hongkong as in Nome.

In later years Jo dressed the part with more elegance. He became a flamboyant caricature of the mode, a screaming commentary—fashion vulgarized. But on that first day of inspiration and experiment he wore a red petticoat, a shawl, a feathered hat, and daubed his big cheeks with rouge. His monstrous mouth had about it some of the curves and reticences of beauty—it was beauty accented, made ridiculous. He spoke with a bass voice. When he laughed, he went into paroxysms. And this Mary of his laughed at everything—life, death, love and hate.

Jo and Victor rehearsed behind the curtain, five minutes of feverish improvisation.

"You stand right over there. I'm Mary. Mary—Everywoman."



Jo would pirouette on his French heels. "Oh, Mr. Jo, you were simply won-der-ful!"

Only more so. A kind of loose woman with a kind heart. You talk to me. I'm drunk. Just a little. And I'm giving everything away—about myself and my friends. No one ought to know me. Everyone does. I'm popular because I'm good and bad. Get me? Now shoot! Quick! Pass it back to me! As if you'd just thought of it—"

So they began.

"What's the matter with us?" Victor gasped, when the curtain fell. A faint patter of applause was drowned by the shuffle of feet. "We've lost 'em!"

Jo grinned. With a bath-towel he wiped off the grease-paint and scrubbed his long, sinewy neck. He kicked the petticoat into a corner and emerged from his disguise. "We're too good," he remarked. "We're over their heads. Wait'll we get to New York."

Victor laughed. They possessed a dollar between them. He left Jo draped upon a property sofa and went outside into the soft, thick, black night. Surreptitiously he juggled six small stones, tossing them against the stars until he had conquered his panic and his hunger. He was comforted by his own dexterity. It was good to feel the smooth cold stones tap his palms and go hurtling into the air, to fall lightly again and again.

Victor had broken his life in two for this double-jointed stranger. He had invested a hundred dollars in their venture, and had added, for good measure, his little reputation. "Joe Victor—Juggler—Never Misses" was done for. He was buried. He was scattered to the four winds. With a pang of regret Victor recalled his obscure triumphs, when he, he alone, had caught and, for a moment, had held the fancy of an audience. He had known the thrill of recognition, that reaching out of attention



He began to juggle plates. Out of the darkened theater issued J. D.'s voice: "You've got it, Victor."

from the darkened, silent house which gives the artist reality, which, for the space of a breath, animates and sustains him. He had surrendered this to throw in his lot with a genius. Even then, twenty years ago, Victor was a shrewd critic; he had in him something of the impresario, the born showman. The theater was the breath of his nostrils. But he knew, as Jo did not know, never would know, the limitations of the theater. He was not so sure that genius and a dollar would carry them as far as Broadway.

Like all showmen, Victor was a gambler. He caught the six stones deftly, tossed them away and went back to Jo.

Jo was asleep. He lay upon the property sofa like a property man. Sleeping, he had the face of a tragic clown, and Victor saw that the scarecrow had shed some tears of his own.

"I don't suppose anyone's really happy," he thought, "even the happiest. Life has taken some bites out of him, and I thought he was stuffed with sawdust. But he bleeds. By God, he bleeds like the rest of us!"

And he sat for a long time, contemplating this mystery. . . .

The next day they added to the sketch, a line here, a shadow there, a laugh, a joke. Men appreciated *Mary*; women resented her because women do not easily appreciate satire.

Jo's wit was broad and highly colored. Victor had no wit. He was a juggler. He tossed words with a certain dexterity, grace.

In the presence of this blatant caricature, this bawling woman, he held his ground with just the right shade of annoyance and amusement. He had a round, gentle face, a soft voice; and he suggested, by his very attitude of apology, that he was ashamed of *Mary*. The audience thought him a prude, and let *Mary* go as far as she liked. No one, not even Jo, guessed why.

Five years later a barge fitted out as a music-hall dropped down the yellow Mississippi as far as New Orleans and went aground with its blunt nose in a mud-bank. "We're busted," the manager said to his troupe. "Broke. We've sprung a leak. Get out, while the going's good. I'll meet the sheriff."

Victor and Jo found themselves again in the city of their obscure beginning; they waded ashore, carrying suitcases, and staggered along the levee in the teeth of a bitter wind. Behind them lay five precarious years. Before them there was nothing.

Jo was thinner; his dark, coarse face was seamed from nose to chin; his mouth wore the unmistakable twist of disillusionment. Victor was fat. He trotted on his short legs like a pony, like a poodle, like a fat sandpiper. Their suede-topped buttoned shoes were worn thin, cracked over the toes, rubbed on the ankle. They wore checked suits that had seen better days, and upon Jo's head a battered Fedora sat recklessly.

"Where'll we sleep?"

They sat in the Square, their collars turned against the wind,

and counted what silver they had. It was not enough for a bed. "You wait," Victor said. "I'll get some money. Wait here. Don't move. Ten minutes!"

He crossed the park at a trot and disappeared. He was thinking of those comfortable days of juggling when he had had a room, a bed, a cold chicken and beer, cigarettes and a warm overcoat with a velvet collar. He was thinking of the theater—the orchestra tuning up, people arriving, the odor of scenery, greasepaint, velvet and papier-mâché. Himself, Joe Victor, the juggler, Never Misses. His legs encased in green tights. A white silk shirt and a red sash—

He paused before the swinging doors of a saloon. The expression he wore was undefinable. He could see, as the cane doors vibrated in the wind, a row of men, a shining bar and bottles, bottles, bottles, all glittering and dazzling. He heard the gurgle and clink and tinkle and pop of the pleasant business of drinking.

"I'll be damned if I'll be jaunty," he said to himself.

He tried to enter with humility, not with deprecation but with just the right shade of embarrassment.

He set his cracked shoe on the rail, rested his elbow on the bar, and with a quick sweep gathered in three empty glasses.

Suddenly he tossed and caught them, behind his back, between his legs, over his head.

"Hey, you! Wat t'ell!"

Setting them down again, he coughed behind his hand.

"Gentlemen," he said bashfully, "I am short a matter of two dollars for bed and board. For two dollars, I will juggle eight glasses and a bottle—"

They threw him out.

This was perhaps the bitterest moment in Victor's life. His humiliation swept him like a poison. He forgot Jo, waiting in the Square. He forgot who he was, or why. The need to be among people and to lose himself in the impersonality of the crowd drove him to Carondelet Street, to the narrow sidewalk, thick with humanity. He stared in at shop-windows. He listened to voices and laughter. He forgot his pain.

When he stumbled upon the broken link in his memory and fitted the chain together again, he ran all the way back to the Square. But Jo was gone. Victor called and whistled. He was like one demented. But Jo and the suitcases had vanished. Where he had been, a hobo sprawled in fitful sleep, wrapped in newspapers.

It was as if Victor had lost his soul. For five years he had labored that Jo might live, had schemed, had plotted, had hoped, had, in privacy, prayed to an unfamiliar God. Jo was the glamorous possibility in a world of hard facts. He was great. He was unique. All Jo needed was a chance: that word, magic, potential, haunted Victor's days and nights. "If only Jo had a chance! We'd show 'em! We'd knock 'em cold!"

In the meantime, waiting on this fickle hussy, they had wheedled a living like two tumblers—anywhere. They were known in the smoky caverns of the underworld. They had appeared briefly in vaudeville, failed, had become lost again. Cabarets had claimed them. Then Taubbaum's Floating Palace, Ten, Twenty and Thirty Cents, up and down the Mississippi—

Now, Jo was gone.

Victor, a body without a soul, a spine without a body, sought, and obtained a job as dish-washer in a restaurant of the *Vieux Carré*.

Here he first saw Louise.

She was a waitress. She came through the baize doors from the (Continued on page 144)



"I don't know where he is," she said. "He owes me twenty-five thousand dollars."

The OLD Home Town

By Rupert Hughes

Illustrated by Will Foster

The Story So Far:

EVER since Ben Webb's mother had been widowed by the murder of his father, an attorney, he had been the mainstay of the family. And all these years Ben was working as a mechanic in the Mississippi River town of Carthage, he had worshiped Odalea Lail, who had been a flower-girl at a wedding he'd attended the day his father was shot. One day Ben was called to mend the run-down Lail furnace, and while seeking to make life more comfortable for his adored Odalea, he hit upon a device for automatic water-heating that seemed likely to win him fortune. Odalea rewarded his successful experiment in her own house by going buggy-riding with him. And when after a picnic supper at sunset, Ben took her in his arms and kissed her, she did not protest.

Yet on the homeward drive they each began to realize the obstacles: Odalea the horror of her family at a match with the lowly plumber; Ben the duty he owed to his widowed mother and to the younger children—how could he support two households? And when they reached home, each encountered lively demonstrations of the situation—Odalea a mother and father and her dominant aunt Mrs. Budlong, the social arbiter of Carthage, sitting up wrathfully to greet her.

For two great pieces of news had come to Carthage that day: the railroad was to build its shop there and send in many workmen, along with an office force of attractive young Easterners; and the dam across the river, which with its power-plant had long been the hope of the town (especially of Odalea's father, who had plunged in real estate), again promised to become a fact.

For once, some measure of realization followed close on prophecy: the shops were built; the Easterners came; the town boomed. Ben was almost too busy earning money—to send his younger brother Guido to college, and to procure training for his sister Petunia's wonderful voice—to mourn the Odalea he had felt in duty bound to forsake. And Odalea was almost too much taken up with the attentions of young Mr. Bleecker of New York, to weep for Ben. Yet the railroad shops and the young Easterners departed almost as suddenly as they had come: a Napoleon of finance had gobbled the road and consolidated it with another.

A time of doldrums followed for Carthage and for Odalea—for young Bleecker was one of the first to go, and he did not come back again. And then at last action began on the dam in earnest and brought a new group of interesting strangers to Carthage. Chief among them was Ian Craigie, the great engineer; a lucky chance made him acquainted with Ben Webb and his mechanical talents; and the upshot of the matter was a real chance for Ben with a job on the dam under Craigie.

To Odalea the coming of the dam brought a new twist of

This latest of the thirteen novels which Rupert Hughes has written for this magazine has evoked a very real enthusiasm from all types of readers. The reason glows apparent on every page: it has all the grace and fine feeling of "The Old Nest," that wonderful story which first won him fame. And in addition it reveals the great power and deep understanding of his mature genius.

fortune in the form of new lovers—first an attractive young man named Tom Merrick, who was so possessed by a demon of jealousy that she was obliged to get rid of him; then Hunter Parrish, a giant of an engineer, whom good Mrs. Webb had taken into her house because he could find no other place in the crowded little

town. He was calling at Odalea's house the night the ice went out on the river, and all the workers on the dam were summoned post-haste to its defense.

The battle against the battering ice was desperate; in the course of it Ben Webb dragged Merrick and Parrish out of the water when the ice broke under them. But the dam held—at least until the fresh menace of the flood that would follow.

Shortly afterward Parrish took Odalea for a motor-ride one evening, and a concatenation of mishaps delayed their return till five in the morning. Odalea found that her scandalized parents had phoned Ben Webb, Craigie, even Mrs. Budlong, seeking her.

"What did Ben say when you phoned?" asked Odalea.

"He said you could take care of yourself, and if Parrish couldn't take care of you, he'd take care of Parrish."

Odalea laughed. She could always depend on Ben.

"Tomorrow morning first thing," said her mother, "you got to 'nounce your engagement, or your father will have to horsewhip Hunter Parrish and your aunt will get Mr. Craigie to discharge him."

"All right," replied Odalea wearily. "I'll say I am engaged, then. I'd say anything to get to bed." (*The story continues in detail:*)

MRS. BUDLONG arrived in all grimness on the Lail front steps the next morning, long before Odalea was awake after her all-night ride with Parrish. Mrs. Budlong stamped the snow from her galoshes with the vigor of Fate knocking at the door. Odalea slept on, but Mrs. Lail made haste to let her sister in.

"Well?" said Mrs. Budlong, casting her eyes upstairs and indicating Odalea by indicating her room. She filled that "Well" with a hundred queries.

"Oh, my dear!" moaned Mrs. Lail. "Such carryings-on! She didn't get in till all hours. Five it was—by the clock!"

"You never know!" wailed Mrs. Budlong, meaning no less than this: that you may raise a girl carefully and carry her safely through whooping-cough, chicken-pox, mumps, school, first love, second, third and fourth affairs and on to spinsterhood, only to find that she has broken loose from all restraints and given the whole town something to talk about.

"Did she say anything about being engaged to the man?" Mrs. Budlong demanded; and Mrs. Lail confessed as if she were guilty of all her daughter's dereliction:



But the infernal idiot
switched on the light
and called over his
shoulder: "Some
folks like the light on."

"Well, she kind of admitted it—not exactly, but kind of. I told her what you'd said about announcing her engagement or leaving town, and I dared her to say she wasn't, so she said she was."

Mrs. Budlong thought acridly of the good old times: girls married then, when they were told to—and whom. Of course, they hadn't done so at all, as a matter of fact; but humanity has always refused to permit mere fact to interfere with any tradition that it finds convenient for argument or comfortable as legend.

Both Mrs. Budlong and Mrs. Lail had defied their parents as girls, and had been kept out all night by accident or fascination. Both of them knew that nothing is usually more innocent or more inconvenient for evil than an all-night adventure; and both of them knew that real mischief is generally improvised in fleeting opportunities. Yet both of them pretended that there was something fatal in a prolonged absence in adumbration.

The real motive that warped their consciences and their suspicions was the ancient instinct of marrying off their womenkind. Odalea's persistent failure to get herself a husband tormented them to such desperation that they were blind to everything else. The thing they were most horribly ashamed of was the peril of an old maid in the family. So they raged and imagined a vain thing, and pitted their wits against a generation that no longer even pretended to obey or acknowledged any obligation to respect its elders. There were still ways, however, of compelling these anarchists by persuasion or stratagem.

"So long as she said she was," said Mrs. Budlong, harking back to the matter of Odalea's betrothal, "she's got to go through with

it. As my Ulie says, she'll tell the world. And if she don't, I will!"

While Odalea lay drowned in sleep overhead, dreaming of who-knows-what, the two old women laid their crafty heads together in conspiracy.

Mrs. Budlong solved almost every problem by a party. She thought in dinners and calculated by receptions. So her one plan for fixing Odalea fast was to give a party and make her announce her engagement to Hunter Parrish as speedily as possible. This was the best and only way to stop the scandal; for once you were engaged in the public eye, the public eye could hardly be shocked by anything you did.

But the party must be soon, and brilliant; and it must launch the old-maid Odalea at last on the sea of matrimony.

Mrs. Lail was a great one for foreseeing disappointments. Look at the experience she had had! Those Lail lots, for instance, that had been all but sold a dozen times before they were finally turned to cash. So she ventured a doubt:

"What if Odalea refuses to announce her engagement? You know Ody!"

"Then we'll announce it for her," said Mrs. Budlong.

"What if Hunter Parrish don't marry her, after all?"



He had not looked into her eyes to read them. Men and women smothered her with stupid phrases.

"What if the sky falls and hits us all on the head? Good Lord, haven't you got enough trouble coming in regular, without going so far ahead to borrow it?"

"We-ell, o' course! But children are mighty hard to manage nowadays. Oh, dear!"

There was no answer to this eternal complaint against the eternal Nowadays; for Mrs. Budlong's mighty brain was already going over her invitation lists. Her nostrils had the flair of a warhorse's when he scents the battle from afar. She was glad to have an excuse for a party. She was downright lonely for a party.

In her conscientious effort to lift Carthage to metropolitan levels, Mrs. Budlong had finally come upon the idea of having a day at home. She was shocked to realize that she had never had one. She really had 365 days at home—and in leap years 366; yet she had never had "a day at home." She chose "third Thursdays" because they sounded so sort of—well, elegant; and she had read of a very grand lady in New York who had them.

Her many friends, or at least her many acquaintances, were stunned at first. It was the Carthage custom for women to run in on one another at all hours and on all days. When Mrs. Budlong brought herself to the point of keeping closed house twenty-nine or thirty days a month, she instructed her molasses-colored maid-cook-butler-furnace-man-gardener-laundress-etc.,-etc., to say to callers:

"Mrs. Budlong aint home, ma'am. She's on'y home thud Thuzdays."

It amused Mrs. Budlong for a while to hide behind her curtains and watch the women slink away in awe. But after a few days of repelling callers, the word got around town that nobody could pass the Budlong portal except on one day a month. It made the greatest sensation Mrs. Budlong had made since she began to use the rather shocking expression: "I hope you will come to me next Wednesday."

Mrs. Budlong's satisfaction was brief. Nobody called at all.

And she grew afraid to call on anybody else lest she find other doors barred against her except on fourth Wednesdays or second Fridays.

She was marooned upon a desert island of etiquette, and she thought the first and second Thursdays would never come or go. The worst of it was, that when the first Third Thursday came along, everybody forgot what day it was. Everybody had grown used to getting along without Mrs. Budlong.

That would never do. She must give a party. She just must! She was trying to find a good excuse when the opportunity for the announcement of Odalea's engagement came pat from heaven. She resolved to outdo herself in splendor and ingenuity.

Odalea lay late abed that morning, and only came downstairs at noon because Hunter Parrish, who had also overslept, called her up; and her mother hustled her down to talk to him and clinch the engagement. The first words Odalea heard were:

"Are you dead?"

"Not quite."

"Got pneumonia?"

"Not yet."

"Do you love me still?"

"Very still."

Mrs. Lail, lacking Mrs. Budlong's advice, clutched at Odalea and whispered shrilly to her:



"Couldn't you kind of ask him if he considers himself engaged to you?"

Odalea dealt her mother a look of unutterable reproach and paid no heed to her badgering even when Hunter Parrish cooed:

"Have you forgotten that you promised to marry me?"

She answered with a mocking laugh:

"Remembering it is one thing; keeping is another."

Her mother frantically whispered in:

"Remembering what? Keeping what? Is he reminding you of your engagement?"

Odalea waived her question with a gesture and kept her too far away to hear more than the inarticulate boom of Parrish's voice:

"You kept me out all night, and now you've got to marry me and make an honest man of me."

"I'm no miracle-worker," Odalea parried.

And she kept parrying him with answers intended to keep her mother in the dark and Hunter Parrish at bay.

Odalea was in a panic. They had driven the timid thing to the wall. The hunters had closed in on her and were about to deliver her to Hunter Parrish. Hitherto she had been afraid of him as one might be afraid of a tethered lion. But now she was to be tethered with him.

Her heart revolted at the thought of a life union with the man.

An evening with him, an automobile ride with him, a little fencing at flirtation, she could endure. But a life with him—week in, week out, year after year, from the altar to the grave—the vision was ghastly!

Only now did she realize that she had been waiting for years for Ben Webb to come to her and ask her to make her home with him. She had wondered at his delay. His eyes and his voice kept declaring his love, but something always checked him before he said the final word, asked the question whose answer was ready.

She could not know that he had sacrificed himself to give his sister and his brothers a chance for the larger career that he denied himself. She had imputed his silence to timidity like her own—or to an indifference unlike her deep admiration for him. But now in her desperation she decided that "cowardice" was the real word for her ladylike avoidance of a declaration.

She was emboldened with the ferocity of a rabbit or a gazelle at bay, and determined to break through the ring of persecutors, make her way to her beloved lover and appeal to him to save both her and himself.

She was thinking all this out even while Hunter Parrish was beating his prayers into her ear.

She shook him off at last in a state of perplexity that made her all the dearer to him. He gave up the effort to conquer her

He was gone. Mrs. Craigie stumbled to a shed in whose lee huddled a few women to be near the crumbling of the dam.

in a telephone-duel and resolved that he would rely on the strength of his arms and his passion when he got within reach of her.

Odalea turned to her mother and gave her no satisfaction at all. She said:

"Oh, Mamma, Mamma, I never bothered you when you were trying to decide on a husband. Why do you keep picking on me?"

"But you told me last night you were engaged to him."

"I was talking in my sleep. And you'd better not push me too hard, or I'll say positively 'No' instead of 'Perhaps.' I know how you feel, and I love you for it, honey, but—well, I wish I were as sure I loved Hunter Parrish as I am that I love you."

"But—"

"Better not, Mamma!"

And she was gone.

When Mrs. Lail sped to Mrs. Budlong with the sad tidings, Mrs. Budlong looked up from the telephone and smiled, then went on with her talk to Mrs. Ex-Mayor Cinnamon:

"It's next Tuesday, my dear. And you and dear Beulah must come to me. Mr. Merrick will bring Beulah, I suppose—when are the darlings going to announce their romance? I shall have something interesting to announce myself. Don't fail to come, now! And I do hope dear Beulah's tonsils will be healed by then. They are so much better out. Good-by, my dear!"

Chapter Thirty-nine

WHETHER it is a form of pride or of self-effacement, men like Ben Webb would rather do without love and die without it than try to compel it. Men of the Hunter Parrish sort make a boast of bending women to their will, assaulting their hearts, carrying them off their feet by impetuosity.

But Ben Webb would not even compete for Odalea. When she was alone, his love yearned out to her. When a crowd surrounded her, he withdrew from the field. For love to him was not a battle but a communion.

For all his air of meekness, he was really far haughtier than barbarians like Parrish, or fiends of jealousy like Tom Merrick. Jealousy was impossible to Ben Webb because, in the first place, he recognized Odalea's right to absolute freedom of action without responsibility to him or anyone; in the second place, he could not love without being loved; and how could one who truly loved him do anything to inspire jealousy?

His passion for Odalea was like a flower that sleeps in the hard soil when it is winter, comes up at the first call of spring, blooms to the full in the noon of sun and droops and closes when the sun goes under a cloud.

Noisy and greedy people like Hunter Parrish did Ben Webb complete injustice when they thought him weak because he would

neither jostle nor rage for love. His was really the fiercest type of pride.

If Odalea were lonely, he would rush to her side. If she needed his protection, it was hers to command. But he would neither hate her nor blame her for anything she did in the quest for happiness.

Of course, he was human enough to be disturbed when Hunter Parrish failed to come home all night. He was not entirely indifferent to the thought of Odalea out somewhere in that storm of moonlight with the arms of Parrish about her.

Yet when Mrs. Lail had called him in the first hour of morning to inquire for the escort of her missing daughter, he had answered stoutly:

"I guess Odalea can take care of herself, all right, and if Hunter Parrish don't take care of her, I'll take care of him."





When he hung up the telephone, Ben found his mother standing by him in her nightgown. She also had lain awake thinking of Odalea and Parrish. Long ago she had hated Odalea because Ben loved her and Odalea liked him. But that was pure mother-in-lawishness in advance. And now she hated Odalea for giving her love to another man than Ben.

She had a woman's eagerness to believe ill of another woman, and she was too shivery to refrain from voicing her suspicion:

"You aint so crazy as to suppose that any girl—even Odaly Lail—is goin' to stay out so late with a man like Parrish, and not—not have a reason for it, do you, honey?"

"When Poppa was alive, he was always sayin': 'When I got no evidence, I got no opinion.' Remember?"

She nodded almost in awe of the man she had wrangled with so freely when he lived, and now regarded with reverence as a prophet

who had gone up to the clouds. All she could say in self-defense was:

"But the Good Book says you should avoid even the appearance of evil, and a girl's got no right to call down suspicion. She'd ought to look innocent as well as be it."

"She may be killed in an accident, for all we know. Let's wait till we're sure we're not misjudgin' the dead."

His mother poured across him that look of pity women save for men who reveal a reverence for other women, that look of regret for wasting perfect trust on an imperfect sex.

They parted and went to their rooms, loving one another perhaps the deeper for the hopeless unreasonableness each saw in the heart of each. . . .

The enormous dawn stole in at their windows on their eyes, parched with sleeplessness, as their impatient ears heard Hunter

Parrish stealing into the front door and up the stairs with the soft tread of a stealthy elephant.

His stealth confirmed Mrs. Webb in her theory of his guilt and gave a sorry wrench to Ben's faith in Odalea; it proved that Odalea had not been kept out by some ghastly mishap, and yet it took away that clean excuse.

There was no further activity in the guest-room till long after Ben had gone to his work on the dam, leaving with his mother a warning that she was to treat their unwelcome guest a little better than ever. He cowed her to his own Arabian hospitality; the more dangerous the enemy, the more faultless the courtesy required by self-respect.

In due time the mail to Ben brought another invitation to Mrs. Budlong's—the second one he had ever had. He read it to his mother and growled:

"Why don't the old hen leave me alone? I'll answer it tonight when I get home."

That night he was torturing himself, his pen and the English language in an effort to say no in Budlongese, when the telephone rang. His mother answered it and came back with a dazed whisper:

"It's Odalea Lail!"

"Didn't you tell her Parrish was out? Prob'ly hasn't got there yet."

"She's askin' for you."

"Me? Go on! You're gettin' deaf!"

His mother jerked her head in the direction of the telephone, and he went to it.

When he heard a voice from heaven chanting, "Is that you, Ben?" he thought what a beautiful, beautiful name Ben is when an angel says it. But he answered merely:

"Yes, it's me, and how's you?"

"I'm fine. Parrish is out."

"I know he is. He just left."

"Want to leave a message for him? Wait till I get a pencil."

"Will you kindly shut up and listen? Are you going to Mrs. Budlong's?"

"I see myself!"

"Please!"

"I went once and—well—enough's enough and too much is a plenty."

"I wanted to know if you wouldn't take me there."

"Who? Take who? Where?"

"You—me—to Mrs. Budlong's."

"Is Parrish dead—or something?"

"No, he's alive. Too much alive."

"Why, he told me he was takin' you."

"So he told me. But—well, he's not."

There was not exactly anguish in Ben's voice as he asked:

"Had a spat?"

"No, we're good friends still; but—well, you and I used to be good friends too; and I'm asking you to take me to Mrs. Budlong's. Will you?"

He had barely enough strength to stammer:

"You don't ever have to ask me anything, Ody. Just tell me."

WHEN at length he had his orders and had hung the telephone up, Hunter Parrish came in at the door. He was looking as if he had been worsted in a battle, but had just begun to fight. Yet he evidently did not know who his rival was, for he mumbled, "Hello, Ben," amiably enough. Ben saw his mountainous form climbing the stairs, and felt sorry for him. What had he not lost in losing Odalea? And how had he lost her?

When Ben went to his mother with the amazing news, she tried not to spoil the flattery that so rarely touched his life. But her heart kept saying to her:

"What's her game now? What trick is she playing on my boy? There's something awful coming to him, and I don't dast even warn him."

Ben imputed her difficulty in equaling his enthusiasm to her old grudges against all the Lails, and he made the most of the new wonder. Whatever Odalea's motive might be, he dared not call on her until the tailor made him those fine clothes which, on the day she snubbed him and his mother, he had decided not to order. He resolved not to shame her by his shabbiness at least, and he warned the tailor to turn him out a dress-suit in time or lose the job.

"Put your needle-gang on triple shifts like we do on the dam, or you lose the order—and your life."

He bought himself a bridegroom's trousseau from the skin out, and he was really not half-bad looking when he presented

himself at last before Odalea's door to take her to what everybody said was to be the greatest of all the Budlong festivals.

As he stood waiting, he snickered to think how he had once come there as a plumber and had been admitted not even by the back door. The slanting cellar steps for him, by gosh! And now he was an important man on the staff of the biggest engineer in the world! And now he wore no overalls, but the swellest dress-suit ever made by Jake Benkle. And in his hand he carried neither kit nor soldering-lamp but a shiny cane with a solid silver tip on its snoot.

THE door opened, and the latest of the Lail cooks put out a face that might have been a Hallowe'en mask. But she let him in, and before he could lay off his grandiose overcoat, Odalea was lilting down the stairs like an angel swooping along a rainbow. Her eyes met his. Her warm hand clasped his, and her warm voice said: "Why, Ben! How beautiful you are!"

That broke up his majesty and made the end of his nose tingle so that he had to rub it, and instead of addressing her with a poem or a serenade, he was wriggling and mumbling:

"Aw, shucks! What's the use of me dressin' up for you? You knew me when I wore my gas-fittin' clothes."

"And I still like you best in uniform," she said.

Somehow that struck him as the most marvelous tact. As he took it, it meant that fine as he was tonight, he had been so satisfactory in his rough things, that even broadcloth could not improve him.

She may have—and she may not have—read Stevenson's essay on the gentleman, wherein he chose as the most gentlemanly of all things what General Grant—of all men to be selected for such an honor—said to his wife (who had always been cross-eyed) when an operation cured her of her strabismus and she stared straight-eyed at him awaiting his verdict.

"I liked you better the other way," he said; and it was a marvelous thing to say. It came well from the great soldier who saved a greater soldier from the necessity of surrendering his sword by simply writing in the treaty: "Officers to retain their side-arms."

It pleased Odalea to see that her subtlety was not wasted on an unappreciative soul; for Ben stared at her with amazement, and his eyes darkled with a sudden mist as he shook his head and crowded a volume of homage into one word: "Gosh!"

The two were aglow with a strangely comfortable, homely, home-y fireside luxury; but Ben foresaw the chill that would come when he met old Lail and his icy wife. He looked anxiously toward the parlor door, but Odalea said:

"Don't freeze! They've gone on ahead!"

He roared with laughter:

"Good Lord, Ody, you read my thoughts before I think 'em."

That cartoon-faced cook still stood gawping at them and holding onto the door, so there was not even a temptation to renew the love-making that had begun so well and ended so soon, all in one golden afternoon and evening long ago.

Odalea would not belittle the old Ben even in the presence of the limousine he had hired to carry her to Mrs. Budlong's; for when she was settled in it, she said:

"Remember that old buggy you rented once? I liked that better."

This befuddled him completely. She had the manner of a woman making love in her own way and signaling that she is willing to be taken in arms. The mere thought of this dissolved the winter in Ben's heart. If Odalea wanted him to love her, God knew he was ready and willing. But just as he groped for her hand, the infernal idiot who had been hired to drive, switched on the light, pushed back the glass and called over his shoulder:

"Some folks like to have the light on—so's other folks can see how swell they are. You can switch it off in yonder if you'd rather be in the dark."

He chuckled meaningly at that, and Ben would have murdered him if he had dared. But he did not dare switch off the light. And so he rode in most unwelcome ostentation, wondering what had come over Odalea to make her so sweet, wondering what had come over the muddled world to straighten it all out.

And she rode at his side, wondering why he did not take the hints she had given him, and wondering why she could not be as audacious as she had planned. She simply could not do the proposing herself.

Chapter Forty

ODALEA had never created more confusion in her life than when she appeared at Mrs. Budlong's, with Ben Webb of all people, and all dressed up—gosh, (Continued on page 155)

Illustrated by J. W. Collins



The Magic Pen

By
Ben Hecht

WHEN you are used to a town where everybody knows you, where your comings and goings have a significance in the eyes of innumerable people; when you are used to saying a hundred Hello's and a hundred So-long's through an afternoon and being said a hundred Hello's and So-long's to; when you are used to these things and the friendliness of a home town, the city of New York is as lonely as a beggar's tin cup on a rainy day. When you come to the city of New York to live after being used to living some-

where else, you stop being Sam Downer and become a Stranger. You make friends at the new office, but as soon as you've said a word to them, the city of New York swallows them up, the streets whirl them away, the electric lights devour them. You eat food and drink soda-waters, go to theaters, cafés and prowl around the stores; but you never get to know the people

Nothing in this magazine has been more highly praised than the very short stories it publishes from time to time. And no one can write them with more artistry than Ben Hecht, novelist, journalist and dramatist. If you've ever felt lonely in a strange city, this human little tale will make a special appeal to you.

traffic; they become a noise that blows your hat off and makes the arches of your feet fall.

This was Sam Downer after four months in New York, lonelier than a train whistle over the prairie, lonelier than a Christmas Eve in an old people's home. He worked in New York; he went to see shows in New York; but he slept in Omaha. He

The young man made his way to the drug-store window and plastered an envelope against it.

who run those places. The city of New York is a ballyhoo shouting outside the window of your lonely bedroom. Boats and trains and automobiles empty people into it every ten minutes, and they disappear; they become crowds and

tried to read New York newspapers, but there was nothing interesting in them. He looked through them in a hurry, searching for an Omaha date-line; and when he found it—which was seldom—his heart warmed.

New York is the home of exiles, and Sam was an exile. He struggled to make himself over, to take what there was and not worry about the rest, to forget he was Sam Downer, to become a Stranger and enjoy himself as a Stranger. He grew cocky as a bantam, slick-spoken as the hero of a comic strip; he got rid of half the r's in his speech and forgot what a freight train looked like. He became a smooth product, a give-and-take guy who could hold his own in the advertising office where he worked. This is the great secret of New York. It gulps the raw material and turns out New Yorkers faster than a button-machine turns out buttons. It took Sam Downer twenty-four years to become an Omahan. It took him only four months to become a New Yorker. However, there's a difference in the finished product, although you can't tell it from the outside. And that is another great secret of the city of New York.

And Sam, like all good New Yorkers in the making, wept, sighed, struggled and prayed for the smell, the feel, the look of Home. The women he saw were different; the men were different; life—everything—was different; and when the boss raised him another five dollars, he would have sold his immortal soul for fifty cents, chiefly because he figured it was the one thing he had no use for in New York.

And here we leave Sam awhile and turn to a young woman named Hazel Paterson.

HAZEL was born in New York, grew up in New York, spoke, breathed, lived, thought and dreamed New York. She knew the names of nearly all its streets; she was as much at home in the Subway as a playful, care-free terrier is on a country road. Broadway was her Main Street; the avalanche of skyscrapers poised over her head was her town hall and her post office.

You would never have picked Hazel out of the crowd for any particular reason. She was pretty, but so were thousands of other girls who passed. She read the newspapers and the magazines. She knew everything and thought nothing. She worked as a stenographer in a large brokerage firm. Her favorite word was *applesauce*, and at night when she went to sleep, which was usually pretty late, she dreamed of cabarets and mansions, of sheiks and Fifth Avenue gowns, of trips to Coney Island and of owning a real fur coat. She lived with her mother, and her idea of the America that existed

beyond 175th Street was summed up in the humorous word *Yonkers*. She thought of the United States probably as a young Roman of the First Republic thought of the Scythian waste—something vast and formless and full of mysterious things, which were, thank heaven, of no consequence.

Trouble overtook Hazel. She lost her job, and her mother grew worried. It was summer-time, and stenographic jobs were scarce—that is, there was seemingly one too many stenographers in the city despite its vastness.

AFTER a three-weeks hunt Hazel met a young man in the lobby of the Capitol movie theater who worked in a drug-store and who tipped her off to an easy job.

"They're lookin' for some one to demonstrate fountain-pens," said this young man; "all you got to do is be able to write."

Hazel went around and got the job. The next morning she took her place in the window of an Eighth Avenue drug-store, feeling very resourceful and somewhat interested. Her instructions were simple. A little machine on the table at which she sat turned over placards for the crowds to read, placards with fountain-pen slogans on them such as "*It Never Leaks*," "*A Smooth Firm Line at All Times*," and so on. All Hazel had to do was write—write words on a sheet of paper and hold up the sheet of paper every few minutes for the benefit of the curious beyond the window who paused to watch her. The boss had also remarked:

"A winning smile will help. Just keep smiling, even if there's only one rubber-neck."

So Hazel wrote, and on the fifth day writing became a bit difficult. She wrote out names of movie stars, of streets, of buildings; and she wrote advertisements for the pen that said, "*This pen is O. K. It writes smooth*," and similar laudatory informations. But after five days Hazel's mind seemed to become a blank for long moments at a time, and there was nothing she could think of to write. The incipient and totally misplaced literary vanity which is in all of us was proving a vital handicap, for it kept Hazel from repeating herself, from merely rewriting the names of movie stars and streets. She tried to think of something new and was reduced to tracing countless O's on the paper, countless flourishes and countless words such as *Mansion, Cabaret, Wall Street, Paris, France*. And at the same time she lost interest in the little groups of rubber-necks that paused before the window to watch her and to study the wonders of the Non-leak Pen.

It was in this mood that Hazel sat at her demonstration on her first Saturday afternoon. Saturday afternoon was a good

time for demonstration, as the boss pointed out when she asked to go home early—owing to the increased number of rubber-necks in the street. So Hazel sat writing, and having nothing to write she wrote a number of O's and then casually, with no consciousness that the great moment of her destiny had suddenly entered the drug-store window, she expanded one of the O's into the word *Omaha*.

The word as she looked at it made Hazel smile. It was a humorous-looking word and reminded her of such words as *Oom* and *Oompah*. So she wrote it out again, diverting her ennui in this manner, and then held up the sheet of paper against the window, pointing with her finger as the boss had instructed her, to the Smooth Firm Line of the Non-leak Fountain Pen, price \$1, filler and sample bottle of ink included.

Thereupon a curious thing occurred. Hazel, glancing with her listless smile at the little knot of rubber-necks, observed one of them waving an arm at her, and pointing excitedly at himself with his other hand. She was about to turn away from this tactless and flirtatious admirer when another curious thing happened. The young man, smiling from ear to ear, as if somebody had handed him a large Christmas present, had made his way to the drug-store window and plastered the back of an envelope against it. On the envelope were written in large script the words: "*Me too!*"

"**W**ELL," said Hazel, talking to her mother that evening, "I met the funniest fella, Ma. He was waiting outside the store when I finished my stunt, and he grabbed hold o' me and shook my hand and kept jumpin' up and down till I thought he was nuts. I figured at first he was just one of those fresh guys; you know—one of them. Well, I was cert'ly surprised. He's just one of the nicest fellas you ever saw, Ma, and we went to a restaurant, and he was full of the funniest stories about some town where he used to live—I forget the name. But I never laughed so much in my life. And of course I know it's dangerous to let just anybody pick you up like that, but—wait till you see him, Ma."

"Am I going to see him?" Ma smiled. "You betcha," Hazel laughed. "We're old friends already. Really I never met anybody I liked so much just off-hand. And he says there's a job in his office that I can have just for the asking Monday. And he's comin' out tomorrow. I asked him where he wanted to go but he said he didn't want to go anywhere. He just wanted to come out and call. Can you beat that? He's got a nice name too—Sam Downer."

CO TH AT PORUTSA

(Continued from page 53)

Then Vemac went on to explain that he had an only daughter, who five days earlier had observed Coth, first from the windows of the palace, and later had gone down veiled into the marketplace in order to regard at closer quarters this virtually pink person. She had returned to demand of her father that he give her this queerly colored and greatly gifted seller of peppers to be her husband. Vemac granted her request, because he never denied his daughter anything, and ardently desired a grandson; but when they sent to look for the pink-colored pepper-vendor with the great and hairless pink-colored head, he was nowhere to be found. The Princess Utsumé had taken this disappointment, with its attendant delay of her nuptials, rather hard. In fine, said Vemac, the girl had fallen sick with love; six physicians had been able to do nothing for her, and nobody could heal her, she declared, except that beautifully tinted and in all ways magnificent pepper-vendor.

"Well, you must tell the poor girl that I

already have a wife," said Coth, "even over and above an understanding with a seller of water-cresses."

"I do not," Vemac submitted, "see what that has to do with it. In Tollan a man is permitted as many wives as he cares to have, within, of course, reason."

"Marrying does not come under the head of reason," said Coth.

"Then, as the husband of my only child," said Vemac, "you will rule over Tollan along with me."

"Oh, oh!" said Coth. For, since he had punctiliously disobeyed Yaotl in everything, he knew this must be a coincidence, and it seemed a very strange coincidence.

"And, finally," said Vemac, "if you are hard-headed about this really excellent opening in life for a green-pepper-vendor, we shall have to persuade you."

"But how," asked Coth reservedly, "how would you persuade me?"

Vemac raised his hand. His persuaders

came, masked, and bringing with them their implements and a stalwart male slave. They demonstrated their methods of persuasion, and after what remained of the slave was quiet at last, Coth also for a while remained quiet.

"Of two evils," Coth said then, "one should choose the more familiar. I will marry."

He let them take him and bathe him and trim his long mustachios and dye his body black and perfume him and set upon his great bald head a coronal of white hen's feathers. A red cloth was wrapped about his loins; upon his feet a priest put painted sandals with little golden bells fastened to them, and about Coth's scented body was placed a mantle of yellow netting very beautifully fringed.

"Now," said Vemac, "do you go in there and comfort my daughter."

Coth obeyed, and found the Princess, who proved to be in an unmitigatedly brunette

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SUPPER

fashion a most charming girl, recumbent and weeping. Coth said: "By such an attachment to me I am moved." He began to comfort her. And in the morning Coth was married to the Princess Usumé, and afterward escorted to the temple of the Feathered Serpent, and there given the royal name Toveyo, and he was crowned as co-ruler along with Vemac over all Tollan.

TOVEYO'S first official act was to send ambassadors to the kings in that neighborhood,—to Cocox and Napaltzin and Acolhua, the second of that name,—but none of these could give him any news of Dom Manuel. Meanwhile Coth cherished his wife, and dealt with other persons also according to his nature. Of his somewhat remarkable behavior in the war with Cacat and Coât, of how in one of his rages he destroyed a bridge with all the people on it, and of how he killed ten of his subjects with a gardener's hoe, there is in this place no need to speak. But it came about unavoidably that, before Coth's honeymoon was over, a deputation from the Taoltacs was beseeching Vemac to have this son-in-law of his unostentatiously assassinated. "For there is really," they said, "no standing him and his tantrums."

"Such," Vemac replied, "has been my own experience. I am afraid, though, that if we kill him, my daughter will be put out, for she seems to have discovered about this Toveyo some attractive feature or another. She was always a clever girl."

"It is better, Majesty, that she should weep than that we all be driven mad. The man's pride and self-conceit are unbearable."

"Nobody knows that better than I do. He hectors me in my own palace, where I am not accustomed to be overrun by anybody except my daughter. In such a position we must be politic. We must first see that this Toveyo is belittled in my daughter's eyes. Afterward, if I know her as well as I think I do, she will consent to let us get rid of him."

One of the darker Taoltacs, who called himself Tal-Cavépan, said then: "This all-overbearing Toveyo is now in the marketplace. Follow me, and you shall see him belittled in his wife's eyes."

They followed, inquiring among themselves who might be this huge Tal-Cavépan, that he spoke so boldly. Nobody remembered having seen him before. Meanwhile Tal-Cavépan went up to where Coth and his wife Usumé were chaffing with a Yopi huckster over some melons. Tal-Cavépan clapped his hand to Coth's shoulder, and bore down with this hand. Coth became smaller and smaller, so that presently Tal-Cavépan stooped and picked up the nuisance whom they called Toveyo, and thus displayed to the Taoltacs their blustering oppressor as a pink midget not more than six inches high, standing there in the palm of Tal-Cavépan's black hand.

"Dance, Majesty! Dance, dreadful potentate!" said Tal-Cavépan. And Coth danced for them. All the while that he danced, he swore horribly, and his little voice was like the cheeping of a young bird.

The people crowded about them, because no such wonder-working had ever before been seen in Porutsa. Tal-Cavépan cried out merrily to Vemac the Emperor: "Is not this capering son-in-law of yours belittled in his wife's eyes and in the eyes of everybody?"

Vemac called out to his guards: "Kill this sorcerer!"

His soldiers obeyed the Emperor. But the Princess Usumé caught up her tiny husband and thrust him into the bosom of her gown, out of harm's way, the while that Tal-Cavépan was being somewhat untidily dispatched.

Now the huge body of Tal-Cavépan lay where it had fallen, and it instantly began to corrupt. "Take that devil carrion out of my city," Vemac commanded his guards, "lest it breed a pestilence in Porutsa."

But when they attempted again to obey the Emperor, they found the body was so heavy that no force could raise it from the ground. So the Taoltacs of necessity left this corpse in their marketplace. And a pestilence, in the form of a small yellow whirlwind, went stealthily about the city; and many hundreds died. Those who yet remained in life, now that they were not able to help themselves, prayed for help from the Feathered Serpent. Getting no sign from him, they prayed to the older gods, to the Slayer with the Left Hand and to the Maker of Sprouts. Then, as the pestilence grew worse, they prayed tentatively to the new god called Yaotl, the Capricious Lord, the enemy upon Both Sides.

Forthwith the dead Tal-Cavépan raised up what was left of his countenance, and he said: "Fasten to me ropes woven of black and of red cords, you worshipers of the Feathered Serpent. Then do you drag my body to the Place of the Dead, which is Yaotl's place; and there let my body be burned upon his altar. So shall this pestilence be ended."

The Taoltacs obeyed, and fifty of them tugged at the parti-colored ropes, but still the corpse could not be moved. Then Tal-Cavépan spoke again, saying: "Fetch Vemac, that Emperor who decreed my death!"

Vemac came, and along with him came his daughter. "Hail, Vemac, son of Imos, of the line of Chan, and of the race of Chivim!" said the corpse. "It appears that these puny sons of nobodies, enfeebled by their long worship of the Feathered Serpent, are not able to remove me from this city. It is therefore necessary that their broad-shouldered and heavenly descended Emperor draw my body to the Place of the Dead, and there burn my body upon the altar of Yaotl."

"What will become of me in the Place of the Dead?" Vemac asked.

The corpse smiled very horribly. "From that holy place the Emperor will depart on a long journey. His son-in-law will thereafter reign, as was foretold, over all Tollan. For the Emperor Vemac will be traveling afar; he will be journeying between two mountains and beyond the lair of the snake and the crocodile, even to the Nine Waters, which he will cross upon the back of a red dog. Nor will the Emperor Vemac ever return from that journeying."

Vemac shivered a little. But he said: "It is right that an emperor should die rather than his people perish. I will draw your body to the Place of the Dead, and I will abide what follows."

Now Coth cried out, like the cheeping of a bird, from where he sat in the bosom of his wife's gown. "This sort of talk is very well, but what assurance have we that this corruption is speaking the truth?"

The corpse answered: "To you, Toveyo, I swear that when the Emperor of Tollan has drawn my body to the Place of the Dead, the pestilence will cease; and I swear too that the Emperor will never return. Thus shall his son-in-law reign in his stead, precisely as was foretold."

"Oh!" said Coth. "You swear to it! Well, now, upon my word, do you take us for garbage-men and scavengers, that we should in any way be bothering about whatsoever emanates from you! For by what oath can a foul midden-heap swear, that anybody should heed it!"

The great corpse stirred restively under the midget's piping taunts. But the voice of Tal-Cavépan said only: "I swear by the oath of the Star Warriors, even by the Word of the Tzitzi-Mimé."

"Ah, ah!" said Coth. "Put me down, dear little wife!" Then Coth, the very tiny pink manikin, strutted toward the black corpse. "You have sworn to these things, Yaotl, by that unbreakable oath of yours which first started all this trouble. Very well! I am co-emperor of Tollan. I am

as much emperor as Vemac is, and it is I who will draw you to the burning you have richly earned; and it is I whom your oath will prevent from ever returning into this infernal Porutsa, where such uncalled-for liberties are taken with a person's size, and where the people are very much too fond of dancing."

"But," said the corpse, "I meant the other emperor!"

Coth answered: "Bosh! Nobody cares what you meant; it matters only that you have sworn. I do not deny that you spoke lightly; even so, you did swear it, by an unbreakable oath; the affair is concluded."

Coth caught at the parti-colored ropes with tiny fingers. But as he tugged, Coth began to grow. The harder he pulled, the greater became his stature, in order that the honor of the Capricious Lord might stay undisgraced, and Yaotl not be evicted from Porutsa by a midget. And now the corpse moved. Now the Taoltacs saw hauling at those black and red ropes a full-grown if somewhat short-legged champion, with a remarkably large and glistening pink head; before him went a little yellow whirlwind, and behind him dragged a dreadful black corruption. Thus Coth passed through the east gate of their city.

"The will of the gods be done," said Vemac, "—especially when it is in every way a very good riddance!" Nobody dissented with his pious utterance. "Let the city gates be closed!" said Vemac then. "Put new bolts on them, lest that son-in-law of mine be coming back to us against the will of the gods. And you, my dear Usumé, since you alone are losing anything, howsoever happily, by this business, you shall have another husband, of less desultory dimensions, and, in fact, you may have as many husbands as you like, my darling, to raise up an heir for us in Porutsa and an emperor to come after me and rule over all Tollan."

Usumé replied: "I have reason to believe, my dear father, that the matter of an heir has been attended to. I shall regret my pink Toveyo and his great natural gifts; and I shall honor his memory by always marrying somebody as near like him as it may be possible to find in this degenerate country. Meanwhile I quite agree with you that it is becoming for people in our position to consent that the will of the gods be done."

AND meanwhile also, in the Place of the Dead, Yaotl sat up and scratched his nose reflectively. The Capricious Lord had put off the putrid appearance of Tal-Cavépan. He now had the seeming which is his in the heaven called Tamo-Anchan: and as he sat opposite the black stone idol there was no difference between Yaotl and the image of Yaotl. From his ears hung rings of gold and silver; in one hand he carried arrows, and in his other hand was the scrying-stone with long feathers of three different colors set about it.

"I will now," said Yaotl, "reveal to you the third obligation which was put upon you. It was that you must never obey my commands in anything."

"That," Coth replied hotly, "is not a fair obligation. It gives me no chance to treat you as you deserve. It is an obligation which strikes directly at the doctrine of free will. For if you will consider, just for a moment, Messire Yaotl, you will see that, by commanding me to do the exact contrary of your most absurd and tyrannical wishes—"

"I had considered that," said Yaotl, dryly. "It was quite necessary I should retain some protection for myself in the lands over which I am supposed to exercise divine power." Now the Capricious Lord fell into a silence, out of which by and by bubbled a chuckle. "Well, you tricked me neatly enough, just now, when I was in train to make you the

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sole ruler over this country. And I was going to have a rather pleasant forenoon, too, with that Vemac! Still, I did make you an emperor; and I have kept in everything the oath of the Star Warriors. So the affair is concluded: I am released from my oath; and you may now return to that home of yours, where people have, in some unimaginable fashion, learned how to put up with you."

"I shall not give over my searching of the west," Coth answered, stubbornly, "until I have found my liege-lord, whom I intend to fetch back into Poictesme."

"But that will never do, because we really must preserve hereabouts some sort of order and rule! And no man nor any deity can hope for actual ease in Tollan so long as you are blustering about like a baldheaded pink hornet. . . . So do you let me think the thought of the Most High Place of the Gods, and take counsel with the will of Teotex-Calli. About this Dom Manuel of yours, for instance—"

Yaotl sat quite still for a moment, thinking and looking into the scrying-stone. And his thought, which was the thought of the Most High Place of the Gods of Tollan, took form there very slowly as a gray smoke; and a little by a little this pallid smoke assumed the appearance of a tall, gray man, clad all in silvery gray armor, and displaying upon his shield the silver emblem of Poictesme; and Coth knelt before his master, in Yaotl's Place of the Dead.

"COth," said the voice of Manuel, "most stubborn and perverse of all that served me! Coth, that must always serve me grudgingly, with so much of grumbling and of ill-grace and of more valor! So, is it you, Coth, is it you, baldheaded, gruff growler!"

Coth answered: "It is I, Master, who am come to fetch you back into Poictesme. And I take it very ill, let me tell you quite frankly, sir, that you should be expressing any surprise to see me in my place and about my proper duty! I follow, as my oath was, after the captain of the Fellowship of the Silver Stallion. They tell me that the Fellowship is dissolved by your wife's orders. Well, we both know what wives are. We know, moreover, that my oath was to follow you and to serve you. So I take it that such surprise in the matter comes from you most unbecomingly; and that much, master or not, I wish you distinctly to understand."

And Manuel said: "You follow me across the world and over the world's rim because of that oath; you pester these gods into summoning me from my last home; and then you begin forthwith to bluster at me! Yes, this is Coth, who serves me just as he did of old. What of the others who swore with you, Coth?"

"They thrive, Master. They thrive, and they listen to small poets caterwauling about you, in those fine fiefs and castles which you gave them."

"But you only, the least honored and the most rebellious of my knights, have followed me even to this far Place of the Dead! Coth, yet you also had your lands and your two castles."

"Well, they will keep! What do you mean by hinting that anybody will dare in my absence to meddle with my property! Did I not pick up an empire here with no trouble at all! You are casting reflections, sir, upon my valor and ability, which, I must tell you quite frankly, and for your own good—"

But Manuel was speaking, rather sadly: "Coth, that which you have done because of your given word was very nobly done, and with heroic unreason. Coth, you are heroic, but the others are wise."

"Master, there was an oath." Coth's voice now broke a little. "Master, it was not only the oath. There was a great love, also,

in a worsening land, where lesser persons ruled, and there remained nobody like Manuel."

But Manuel said: "The others are wise. You follow still the Manuel who went about Poictesme. Now in Poictesme all have forgotten that Manuel, and our poets are busied with quite another Manuel, and my own wife has builded a great tomb for that other Manuel. . . . Coth, that is always so. It is love, not carelessness, which bids us forget our dead, so that we may love them the more whole-heartedly. Unwelcome memories must be re-colored and re-shaped; the faults and blunders and the vexing ways which are common to all men must be put out of mind, and strange excellencies must be added, until the compound in nothing resembles the man that is dead. Such is love's way, Coth, to keep love immortal. . . . Coth, O most bungling Coth," said Manuel, very tenderly, "you lack the grace even to honor your loved dead in a decorous and wise fashion!"

"I follow the true Manuel," Coth replied, "because to do that was my oath. There was involved, I cannot deny it, sir, some affection." Coth gulped. "I, for the rest, am not interested in these newfangled fine lies they are telling about you nowadays."

"Coth, I repeat to you, the others are wise. I have gone, forever. But another Manuel abides in Poictesme, and he is nourished by these fictions. Yearly he grows in stature, this Manuel who redeemed Poictesme from the harsh Northmen's oppression and lewd savagery. Already this Manuel the Redeemer has become a very notable hero, without fear or guile or any other blemish; and with each generation he will increase in virtue. It is this dear Redeemer whom Poictesme will love and emulate; men will be braver because this Manuel was so very brave; and men, in one or another moment of temptation, will refrain from folly because his wisdom was so well rewarded, and—sometimes, at least—a few men will refrain from baseness, too, because all his living was stainless."

"I," Coth said, heavily, "do not recall this Manuel."

"Nor do I recall him either, old grumbler. I can remember only one who dealt with each obligation as he best might, and that was always rather inefficiently. I remember one who reeled blunderingly from one half-solved riddle to another, thwarted and vexed, and hiding very jealously his hurt. . . . Well, it is better that such a person should be forgotten! And so I come from my last home to release you from your oath of service. I release you now forever, dear Coth, and I now bid you do as all the others have done; and I now lay upon you

my last orders: I order that you too forget me, Coth, as those others have forgotten, who might have known me better than you did. For it is necessary that you too, bald realist, should serve this other Manuel, and should forget, as your fellows have forgotten, that muddled and not ever quite efficient bull-necked struggler who has gone out of life and vigor and out of all persons' memory."

Coth said: "Return to us, dear master! Return, and with the brave truth do you make an end of your people's bragging and vain lies!"

But Manuel said: "No. For Poictesme has now, as every land must have, its faith and its legend, to lead men more nobly and more valorously than ever any living man may do."

Coth replied, brokenly: "But, Master, we are men of this world, a world made of dirt. Oh, my dear master, we pick our way about that dirt as we best can! The results need surprise nobody. The results are rather often, in a pathetic fashion, very admirable. Should this truth be disregarded for a vain-glorious dream?"

And Manuel answered: "The dream is better. For man alone of animals plays the ape to his dream."

HERE Yaotl ended thinking, and put aside the scrying-stone. And his thought was no longer of Manuel, and nothing was apparent in the Place of the Dead save Yaotl and the image of Yaotl and Coth standing there, alone and small and remarkably subdued-looking, between the huge twins.

"It would appear," said Yaotl, "that some men are no more tractable than are the gods when the affair concerns a keeping of oaths. And so Toveyo will be remembered in this land for a long while."

And Coth answered, rather drearily: "Yes, it is such fools as you and I, Messire Yaotl, who create unnecessary trouble everywhere. Well, I also am now released from my oath! And my master has spoken bitter good sense. The famousness of Manuel is but a dream and a loud jingling of words which happen to sound alike; it is a vanity and a great talking by his old wife and my gray peers; and yet this nonsense will hearten people, and will serve all people always, better than would the truth. And my faith is a foolishness, in that, because of a mere oath,—like your Star Warriors' Word of the Thingumajigs, sir,—I have followed after the truth where every person fares better on one or another lie."

"Each to his creed," said Yaotl. "So do men choose between hope and despair."

"Yet creeds mean very little," Coth answered the dark god, still speaking almost gently. "The optimist proclaims that we live in the best of all possible worlds; and the pessimist fears this is true. So I elect for neither label. I merely know that, at the end of all my journeying, there remains for me only to settle down, in my comfortable castles yonder in Poictesme, and to live contentedly with my fine-looking wife Azra and with my son Jurgen—that innocent dear lad, whom his old hypocrite of a father will, by and by, beyond any doubt, be exhorting to imitate a Manuel who never lived! And I know, too, that this is not the ending which I would have chosen for my saga. For I also must now decline into fat ease and high thinking, and I would have preferred the truth." Coth meditated for a while; he shrugged; and he laughed without hilarity. "Capricious Lord, I pray you, what sort of creatures do men seem to the gods?"

"Let us think of more pleasant matters," Yaotl replied. "For one, I am already thinking of the way in which I can most speedily get you, O insatiable grumbler, back to your dear home, and out of my too long afflicted country."

Nunnally Johnson

There is a name that has not yet appeared in The Red Book Magazine, but readers will encounter it in an early issue, as that of the author of one of the funniest stories we have ever published. It is about a child of the motion pictures; and having read the story you will never forget the title—
"THE PAPER-EATER"



MISS ELINOR PATTERSON is the beautiful young daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Medill Patterson and a great-granddaughter of the late Joseph Medill, who founded one of Chicago's most distinguished families.

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SPRING AND THE BEAUTIFUL BLONDE

(Continued from page 49)

blonde,"—and the man had looked at her! Not that Celia was really surprised. She had heard herself called a beautiful blonde many times before. She didn't think of herself as beautiful exactly, but, well—nice-looking, anyhow. Still, lots of folks thought she was beautiful and here she was going back to a dirty old office to take dictation from stupid old Drewsey about aluminum, on a lovely day in spring. She just couldn't do it! She simply couldn't go back to the office. She might get fired, but the chances were she wouldn't be. What if she was? What was an old job, anyhow? She had never done anything just like this in all her life, but she had stayed away from the office altogether and nothing had happened. She could report tomorrow about the sudden toothache she got after she had finished eating luncheon. What's one toothache more or less in spring? There weren't any important letters—even Drewsey's imagination couldn't make them that.

It was spring! Celia was in New York on a sunny afternoon in April—and had nothing to do! She wanted something devilish to happen—something absolutely devilish. She wished she hadn't spent her money on luncheon now. Sixty cents, with the tip. Oh, well, she could do a lot of things without spending money. She looked in the shop-windows again, but these had lost their savor. She flirted just a bit with half a dozen men even while she realized that they had stupid faces. Then she walked rapidly over to Washington Square.

A dreamy-eyed fellow was seated on one of the benches. Was he a poet? Celia wondered. She knew that poets lived in Washington Square, and she was curious and a bit interested in poets. But she also knew that usually poets didn't have any money, and money was included in her scheme of things. Still, it might be nice to meet some one who was really poetical and could grow romantic about Life and things. She was tired of boys like Roy who never read any books at all. Not that Celia was herself a great reader, but she liked to think that she was rather understanding and that she got a lot out of the books that she did read. She sat down on a bench near the young poet. You couldn't flirt with a fellow like that—even if you wanted to flirt. It would be nice to know him, though.

A little Italian boy running close to Celia slipped and spilled at her feet the contents of a basket he was carrying. She jumped up to help him gather his possessions, and the poet jumped up too. How nicely things were coming out! They laughed together at the boy as he scampered off to his mother, who, standing near by, had been watching the performance suspiciously.

Celia wanted to say something important. "It's just like spring, isn't it?" she said, although she had been angry at Roy a few hours ago for making the same observation.

"Yes, it is," said the young poet. "That's why I come over here to the park. I'm working on a job a couple of blocks from here and thought I'd take a little time off—" "What do you do?" asked Celia a bit nervously.

"I'm a plumber," said the young poet. Celia shivered almost noticeably.

"I hope you've enjoyed your time off," said Celia, most condescendingly. "Don't let me keep you. I'm having luncheon at the Ritz with a friend of mine, and I'm late now."

Celia climbed to the top of a Fifth Avenue bus. The sun was pleasant and warm, the air fresh. She buttoned her coat high at her throat. It was nice, rumbling up Fifth Avenue on top of the bus. Still, this wasn't anything happening. The unrest which she had had when she got up was still there. She wanted adventure, something definite, some of the many things she had never had.

At Thirty-eighth Street Celia climbed down and went into a department store. It was half-past two now—people wouldn't think that she was a working-girl. Celia had an idea that the people she passed clicked her into place in their minds, and that if she appeared during the average working girl's lunch-hour they would immediately put her down as a girl who worked. Now at half-past two—

With an assumed elegance, her head a bit higher than she usually carried it, she examined the elaborate bottles at the toilet counter. Lovely things! Expensive powders in quaint boxes, strange scents in colored vials, cosmetics of all kinds, rouges, creams. She wished she could buy some of all of them. Finally she did make one purchase—a rather inexpensive lip-stick, the kind a girl in the office had just bought. She rather liked the color of it, a nice scarlet. Going up in the elevator, she applied it to her lips, looking in her small mirror. She liked the effect.

On the third floor she looked at lingerie, slipping into a georgette negligée of orchid and pale green. Of course she couldn't afford it, but then she never could afford things. Walking in front of the mirror, she imagined herself wearing it while she had breakfast in bed and read her mail brought to her by a white-aproned maid. There were people who did such things—

In the Misses' Department, Celia asked to look at evening gowns. She actually tried on half a dozen, a blue and silver tulle, a rose-colored gown, one of lavender and gold-embroidered chiffon. She told the clerk she was getting ready for an early spring in Virginia. She was glad she had on a good-looking combination. It was one her Aunt Nora had given her for Christmas. Of course none of the gowns suited her! How she wished she could have bought the rose one! She would have to get some sort of a gown before long to wear when she went to the restaurants, at night, for dancing, but she couldn't afford one of these.

At another shop she tried on a dozen hats, pulling them far down over one eye and making coquettish faces in the mirror. She loved the hats in this particular shop. She wished she could get a new hat this week, but her old one would have to do for a while. . . .

At a quarter of four Celia decided that she wanted something more exciting to happen than just looking at clothes. She could look at clothes Saturday afternoons, though this was much nicer, for they didn't think she was a working girl. She decided to telephone to Harvey Raines. Harvey had a business of his own and could get away for the afternoon if he wanted to. She'd persuade him to take her to tea, some place. But when she got his office on the telephone, his stenographer informed her that Mr. Raines had left for the day with an out-of-town customer.

Celia telephoned to Freddie Ingram. Fred-

die wasn't as much fun as some of the boys she knew, but usually he could get away, for he worked for his father. But Freddie's father was in the office, it seemed, and for some quaint reason was desirous of his son's presence there too.

There were half a dozen girls Celia could have gone to see. There was Edna Phillips, who had been married just a year. Edna had a new baby, and that would mean sitting in Edna's house and listening to stories of Harry and the baby, or walking up and down in front of the apartment with the baby carriage. No fun at all for a day in spring when you've stolen an afternoon to do remarkable things. The other girls she thought of would be as uninteresting as Edna. She didn't want to talk to girls, anyhow.

Celia climbed up on a bus again and rode as far as the Museum. It was a "free day." Celia had been in the Museum a number of times, and she had always made up her mind to study the pictures and the statues at leisure, but she never had. Now she went in and walked aimlessly through the large rooms, stopping to examine a piece of Egyptian glass, a cast of a famous piece of sculpture, a bright suit of armor. She walked up wide stairs and looked at the paintings, Franz Hals, Rembrandt, Whistler. She liked the Whistlers, though she couldn't have told you exactly why. She thought Rembrandt's "Old Lady Cutting Her Nails" was a bit disgusting. Couldn't he have found something more pleasant to paint? She looked at French furniture, American furniture. Interesting, in a way. But this wasn't anything that she wanted.

Celia went out into Fifth Avenue and walked down. It was nearly five o'clock. Something simply *had* to happen! Things happened to other girls. Weren't girls always telling her about marvelous adventures they had had? She walked a few blocks, waited for a bus again. Then something did happen!

A MAN in a good-looking, low car smiled at her. She smiled back. The car slowed up at the curb.

"Hello," he said. "Why, I thought you were Miss Hastings, a girl I know."

"I thought you were the Prince of Wales," said Celia.

The man laughed.

"A great little kiddie, I see. Wont you let me act as a substitute for the Prince?" Celia pretended to consider.

"Oh, I might, as long as the Prince doesn't happen to be around. What have you to offer?"

"My car—myself. Wont that do?"

"We thank you," said Celia, and jumped into the car.

This was unusual, certainly. While she couldn't exactly say she had never flirted before, still, she hadn't really flirted before—like this. Smiles, but not real flirting—and here she was in a good-looking roadster beside a good-looking man she had never seen before. At least the car was all right and the man was fairly good-looking. If Celia had been given her choice of a hundred young men for an afternoon drive, she probably would not have chosen just this very one. Still—this was her day in spring, and this was what had happened to her.

The man had a little too much chin. It hung just a bit over his collar, but he had a nice profile, a straight nose, rather heavy eyebrows, a florid complexion—not really bad-looking. They drove down Fifth Avenue almost in silence.

"Where would you like to go?" he asked finally.

"Where would you suggest?" countered Celia. She didn't know what to say.

"QUIT"

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"What about having tea with me?" he offered.

"Tea suits me fine," replied Celia.

HE took her to the Plaza. Celia knew it was the Plaza because she had passed there a hundred times. She had even walked in one entrance, through the lobby and out the other entrance one day when she thought she looked especially well. And now—tea!

The young man seemed at home in the Plaza. A waiter piloted them to a little table, and Celia ordered little cakes because she couldn't think of anything else to order. They tasted exactly like the cakes sold in a shop in Elmwood. She tried to chat pleasantly to the young man, though, to her disappointment, he proved not a bit more exciting than the boys she saw every day. She didn't know exactly what she wanted of him nor expected of him, but he was unsatisfactory, nevertheless. He asked her questions—oh, rather skillful questions—but she simply couldn't tell him that she was a stenographer who had taken an afternoon off, so she made up vague things about boarding-school and college. She felt that she was rather confused as to details—she had gained her knowledge from conversations and from things she had read. The young man's conversation was full of references she didn't quite understand, things she didn't know about. She felt ill at ease—and she didn't like feeling that way.

She had thought the Plaza would be full of beautifully groomed women and smart men. The women were well groomed enough, that was true; but they were exactly the same kind of clothes the girls she went with wore, smart little hats, little straight frocks. Of course their clothes were far more expensive, but on the whole, the women weren't even as good-looking.

"I wonder if you knew that I always liked blondes," said the young man. "I'm awfully partial to them—and you're certainly a Beautiful Blonde."

A beautiful blonde! What if she were—if this were the best she could do? She felt that she should have been thrilled at this adventure. She was awfully disappointed, instead.

They were back in the young man's car again, and he didn't seem quite as nice now. He sat a little too close to her, in spite of the fact that he should have kept his mind on his driving. He said things that were slightly unpleasant. He wanted to make a date, but Celia didn't like the methods he was using in trying to make it. Celia asked him to take her to the station. She'd be just in time to catch the six-seven, the train she usually caught.

Celia caught the train and even had time to buy a paper, reading the jokes on the way out. She didn't want to think. She hurried from the Elmwood station.

"Have a hard day at the office?" her mother asked as she came from the kitchen wiping her hands on her apron as she always did when Celia came home.

"Oh, so-so," said Celia.

"How was Drewsey today?" asked her mother, who knew all the details of the office and listened with considerable interest to the things Celia usually told her.

But today Celia did not feel like talking. She went up to her room. She powdered her face, and put on a generous amount of the new lip-stick. Her father came home, and she heard him and her mother talking, as usual, in the kitchen. What did they find to talk about, after all these years? Nothing ever happened to them. Celia wondered if they thought this was living, her mother cooking and cleaning all day, and her father working and just getting home in time for dinner and falling asleep, early, over his paper. Why, her folks thought it was an event when they went to the movies. They hardly ever went into New

York for a show. On Saturday nights when they got together with a few of their friends and played bridge and had something to eat and drink, they thought they were having the gayest kind of an evening. They didn't have anything better to look forward to. Oh, well!

At dinner Celia didn't talk much. The restlessness of the season was still upon her. After dinner she helped her mother take the dishes off the table and made a perfunctory effort to help her wash them, stopping almost in the midst of wiping a dish when her mother said:

"You've been working hard all day, Celia. Go in and rest—I'll finish the dishes."

In the living-room Celia straightened the rose-colored lamp-shade, rearranged the few books off the table, flipped the pages of a magazine. She hoped that the telephone would ring. It would be wonderful if some mysterious voice she had never heard got on her line by mistake and turned out to be a rich, handsome man who liked blondes. Still it would be nice enough, even, if a girl she knew would ring up to ask her to come over to meet some new boys—or even if one of the boys would ring up to ask her to go some place to dance.

The telephone did not ring. Celia put her coat on and went outside. The grass was still the matted, dead color it had been all winter. No visible signs of spring. Still, there was something in the air—

SHE walked down to the corner of the street and back again, nodded to a neighbor. All of the houses just alike, excepting for things the people put inside of them—and she thought most of the things they put inside were awfully ugly. Oh, well. She came back to her own house, seated herself on the top step, cupping her chin in her hand. What did all these people in all these houses think about? How could they go on living like this—like everyone else?

She heard a noise, looked up. Roy Edwards in his shiny little black car! The car stopped in front of her house.

"Hello," said Roy. "What about going for a drive?"

Celia sighed. She might as well. There was nothing else to do. Roy was a good driver—that was something.

They went over to the Boulevard, and Celia was a bit pleased at the way Roy managed to dart in and out and get ahead of the other cars. The fact that he risked both their lives about twenty times only seemed usual and pleasant to both of them. Roy sat low in the car as if he were driving a racer, and he wore no hat. They stopped once for sodas and drank them through straws.

Then Roy took a less frequented road. It was quiet and still, and the air was balmy.

"Gee, it's great here," said Roy. "Don't you think so, Celia? You actually can tell it's spring. We'll have a lot of fun this spring and summer, Celia. Did I tell you I'm going to get a raise the first of June? That'll help a lot, you bet. Maybe I'll get off all day, Saturdays. Your firm closed last year on Saturdays, didn't it? We'll go to the beaches every week-end—lie on the sand all day—"

Talking with Roy this way, the way they always talked, a curious peace came to Celia—a sense of satisfaction, of completion, almost. She did not even regret the wasted afternoon nor the excuse she would have to make to Drewsey in the morning. Maybe she was just tired.

They stopped talking. They were driving in the country, now, and were alone except for an occasional car flashing by. The smell of spring seemed even more accentuated than it had all day. Roy stopped the car. Celia knew what that meant, and somehow she didn't resent it. Roy put his arm around her. His cheek was against hers—his lips.

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Eat two or three cakes regularly every day before meals: on crackers—in fruit juices, water or milk—or just plain, nibbled from the cake. For constipation especially, dissolve one cake in hot water (not scalding) before breakfast and at bedtime. Buy several cakes at a time—they will keep fresh in a cool dry place for two or three days. All grocers have Fleischmann's Yeast. Start eating it today!

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A digestive aid that does not defeat its purpose!



GASTROGEN Tablets promptly relieve indigestion, "heartburn" and gas. Unlike many other correctives they give relief without interfering with the normal process of digestion.

The most common thing to take, as you probably know, is an alkali such as soda bicarbonate. Soda bicarbonate does correct hyper-acidity, but unless you use exactly the right amount, it goes too far and an alkaline content remains in your stomach which checks digestion.

For the stomach should be slightly acid (1-5 of one per cent)—that is the normal condition for healthy digestion.

Gastrogen Tablets work in a better way!

Gastrogen Tablets promptly neutralize acidity and then permit digestion to go on. They relieve the distress—and there they stop.

A few minutes after taking, your stomach will be free from alkalinity and normally digesting your food. Your indigestion will vanish, your "heartburn" will be gone. Even if you take a dozen there can be no bad after effect, for when Gastrogen Tablets have corrected hyper-acidity they cease to work and pass through the system with no further change.

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Gastrogen Tablets are mild, safe, effective, and convenient. They combat digestive disturbances without retarding digestion. They are pleasant to taste and they purify the breath.

Your druggist has them in handy pocket-tins of 15 tablets for 20c; also in cabinet-size bottles of 60 tablets for 60c. If you want to try them before you buy them, send the coupon for free introductory packet of 6 tablets.

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She felt a curious thrill, a thrill she had never felt before—a thrill she had felt, usually, only when she read the love-scenes in her favorite magazines.

"Honey," said Roy, "you know I'm just crazy about you."

"Why, Roy," Celia said. "Why, Roy!" As if his love-making were the greatest surprise and the most wonderful thing in the world.

"Listen, sweetie," said Roy, "why can't you and I get married? You know I love you—and now with this raise and all—"

"Oh, I don't know," said Celia, and yet even as she said it she realized that she *did* know. Why, she *wanted* to—wanted to marry Roy. It seemed silly, and yet, in a way, it wasn't silly at all. Girls at the office like Miss Hanson or Lulu Sherwood would be tickled to death if a boy like Roy even looked at them. Roy was a fine boy. She knew that.

Roy was talking.

"Let's get married right away. I can get a week's vacation, and we could take the car and go some place, and then when we

got home we could go to housekeeping. Have you seen that row of houses they're putting up over on Alban Avenue? They're awfully nice, honey; I saw them just the other day. We could get one of those without hardly any cash payment down, and we'd be only three blocks from our folks."

"You mean those little white houses?"

Celia knew them. There were two rows of them, all just alike, all painted white instead of alternating red and green. They were smaller than the houses she and Roy lived in now.

"Oh, I think they're darling, Roy," she said. "Alice and I looked at them when we were out walking, Sunday. They haven't any dining-rooms, but they've got the cutest little breakfast-rooms you ever saw. We could get one of those darling colored-enamel sets for it. It would be grand, with our own home right from the start. You'd have a garage for the car and—why, I could fix up that house cuter than any other house in the row—cuter than any other house in Elmwood—"

THE TEENEY TREASURE

(Continued from page 67)

The Salem Register printed a long notice of the Captain's death, and this was reprinted in Boston and New York journals. The notice said that Captain Jack Teeney "was well and favorably known in the China trade." Those words constituted the "taps" of the clipper-ship captains.

YOUNG Richard Teeney grew up to be the image of his father. Over six feet, hard as iron, the same raven hair, the same splendid eyes. And he loved the sea as a Teeney should. Third officer of the *Mary Brown* at eighteen; first officer of the *Sooloo* at twenty-one.

The *Sooloo* docked at Canton on December 18, 1872, exactly eleven years and eight months after the death of Captain Jack Teeney. Young Richard started up the Cheung-tei by rickshaw, heading for the Shamen, but he hadn't proceeded a quarter of a mile when he got the surprise of his life. A blockade caused the rickshaw coolie to halt for a moment, and while Richard stared about him, a slim woman, handsomely gowned and wearing jewelry of great value, hurled herself from the sidewalk, flung her arms around young Teeney's neck and cried: "Beloved, you have come! I knew they lied when they told me you were dead! Ah, I knew, dear heart of mine, that you would come!"

Richard Teeney disengaged himself, held the lady off with a strong right arm, and blushing greatly, told her that he had not the honor of her acquaintance. Young Dick had been in many ports and was a little suspicious of the tricks of sirens.

"Jack!" cried the woman. "Do you not know me, beloved? For eleven long years I have waited!"

Richard Teeney sprang out of the rickshaw, took the arm of the now hysterical lady and piloted her down a side-street into a tea-house.

"It was my father that you knew," he said softly. "He has been dead for many years."

The woman was sobbing now. "They told me, but I would not believe," she whispered. "I thought the American captains lied when they said he was killed."

"It was you who wrote all the perfumed letters on rice-paper after my father's death?" said Richard. "I was too young to answer them, but I have seen them. Jane Pettigrew, my father's housekeeper, kept them."

"I wrote them because he did not come," sobbed the woman. "I loved him! He was my life!"

"Let us talk," said young Dick. "I have an hour to spare."

It was a great story that Richard Teeney brought back to Salem when the *Sooloo* docked at Derby wharf—a story that set tongues wagging not only in Salem but in Lynn and Gloucester, Newburyport and Portsmouth. Captain Jack Teeney, on his last trip in *The Green Mermaid*, according to the tale told by his son, had brought with him to Salem a pearl valued at seventy thousand dollars!

Young Richard brought confirmation of the tale. He carried the sworn declaration of the Princess, supported by sworn statements of the cashier and president of the Bank of Taiwan (*Toiwan Nyan-hong*), the two latter having delivered the pearl into Teeney's hands on the day he sailed on his last voyage. The pearl was matchless. The motive of the crime was clear as daylight.

The Salem authorities opened an inquiry. All the incidents relating to the murder of Captain Jack Teeney were reviewed. The two men who found the unconscious captain—Cy Burling and William Cudworth—were called up and examined. Jane Pettigrew was put through a cross-examination, and Doctor Thacher gave evidence. A call was sent out for the crew of *The Green Mermaid* on the voyage that ended at Salem on April 15, 1861. Salem was on its mettle.

It was quite a task to trace the officers and sailors carried by the *Mermaid* on that voyage, but it was done. Of the forty-one hands that reached Salem with Captain Jack Teeney, sixteen had passed on. Fourteen of these had met their death at sea, while two had died in their beds at Salem. According to all reports the sixteen had died as poor as Job. It was ridiculous to think that a treasure like "The Tear of Tao-tang" had ever fallen into the hands of one of them.

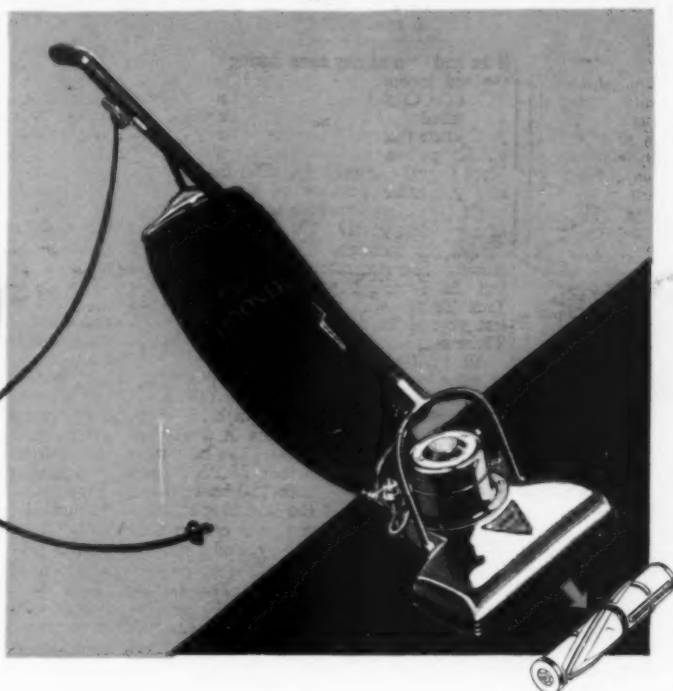
Yet the Salem authorities reasoned that no one but a member of the crew could have known that Captain Jack Teeney carried the wonderful pearl. Records proved that no ship from Canton berthed at Salem during the five days preceding the murder or the three days following. The statement of the Princess put forward the fact that the gift of the pearl had only been decided on two days before Captain Jack sailed, and as *The Green Mermaid* had made a record voyage, it was impossible for a member of the crew of another ship to possess the information.

The first and second officers of *The Green Mermaid*, Mr. Mace of Newburyport and Mr. Charleton of Salem, ranking captains at the time of the second inquiry, were summoned and questioned. Captain Mace gave

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supporting evidence to the story that young Richard Teeney told. Mr. Mace said that he was always of the opinion that Captain Jack Teeney carried something valuable on his last voyage. He just formed this opinion without having any definite basis. Captain Teeney seemed extra careful about locking his cabin door when he retired—double locking it, as a matter of fact.

The examining magistrate asked the officer if he had seen at any time during the voyage the red lacquer box that had been found beside the Captain. The officer had not. He was asked if he thought that any of the crew knew that Captain Jack Teeney carried on his person a wonderful treasure. Mr. Mace thought it unlikely. Did he know of any particular member of the crew who might become a murderer to gain possession of a priceless pearl? The officer smiled and evaded the question. They were not a bad crowd, as he remembered them. They were just hard-worked seamen. Yes, Captain Jack Teeney was a hard captain. On the last voyage he drove *The Green Mermaid*. There was little rest for the crew.

All available members of the crew were examined. One and all asserted that they knew nothing. Those not in Salem or nearby ports were communicated with by letter. A few voiced their indignation at what they thought a vague insinuation. The boatswain of *The Green Mermaid*, one Matthew Fernald, writing from a Black Ball boat docked at New York, penned the following reply:

"Deare sir i cam home from canton with the lait Captain Jack Teeney, and i can say i didnt kno the captain had a perl i thot by the way he drove the boat that he had the itch. yours, Matthew Fernald."

The sheet of paper on which Captain Jack Teeney had written a single word and a capital letter, and drawn two small squares, one of which was a little larger than the other, was examined by scores of persons who tried to solve the riddle. Experts in cryptography came from Boston and New York, but their suggestions bore no fruit. It seemed a ridiculous puzzle for Captain Teeney to construct in his dying moments.

And so the inquiry ended. The statement of Captain Mace, one-time first officer of *The Green Mermaid*, supported, in a way, the sworn declarations of the Princess, and the cashier and president of the Bank of Taiwan. Captain Jack Teeney had brought to Salem a pearl valued at one hundred thousand Canton taels, or, roughly speaking, seventy thousand dollars, and this wonderful treasure had disappeared.

The fruitlessness of the inquiry maddened Richard Teeney. He talked so much of the lost pearl that he became known in a hundred ports as "Treasure" Teeney. In the course of time he got his own ship, married a girl from Mystic and raised a large family, but his life was soured by the knowledge that he could not discover the murderer of his father, or locate the Tear of Tao-tang. He made Canton many times during the years that followed his first meeting with the Princess, and each time he called upon the lady who had loved his father. The Princess remained true to the memory of the dashing Captain Jack, and when she died, a tintype of Captain Teeney, taken years before by a photographer in Union Street, Salem, was placed between her little hands.

In the spring of 1892 Treasure Teeney, in command of the *Northern Dawn*, met a gale off Java Head and tried to tear his way through it with all sails set. At least, that is what folk surmised, for no one lived to tell the story of the disaster.

THE eldest son of Treasure Teeney, grandson of the famous Captain Jack, stayed on shore. He was, curiously, a small, weak man, and he kept a drygoods store in Essex Street, not far from the Salem Athenæum. Upon him, too, fell the great

desire to find out what had become of the Tear of Tao-tang that his grandfather had brought from Canton. It developed into a mania. He dreamed of the great pearl night and day.

This Thomas Teeney of Essex Street collected and methodically filed in their proper order all the papers and clippings connected with the Teeney Treasure: a most painstaking and laborious work, to which he devoted years of effort. In a room at the back of his little store he gathered every scrap of writing or print that had to do with the murder of Captain Jack and the loss of the Tear of Tao-tang.

A queer collection of court papers, letters and clippings! Nothing omitted. There were yellowed scraps from journals in Salem, New York, Boston, Canton and Shanghai telling of the murderous attack that resulted in the death of Captain Jack Teeney. There were the reports of the inquest, very voluminous. There were the little perfumed letters that had come from the Princess after the death of the Captain, quaint, pathetic little missives whose flimsy rice-paper had taken on a strange golden tint in the years that had passed. The little letters thrilled the solemn storekeeper of Essex Street. He read them a thousand times, making useless deductions. All had been written by professional letter-writers, the handwriting of no two being alike. Each one began with the word "Beloved" and finished with the words: "Your sorrow-stricken slave who waits patiently the coming of her master." Thomas Teeney thought them priceless. She told how she had bought silk upon which were paintings of white cranes, and this silk she would wear when her lord came again to the Chu-kiang. . . . She had bought a *shan* of black damask through which little threads of gold had been cunningly drawn. It also awaited his arrival. . . . Spring had come. There were cherry-blossoms on the trees near the green pool—the pool at which they had sat and listened to the croaking of the big frog. "Where you laughed at my fears, beloved."

There were letters from clipper-ship captains who had heard of Captain Teeney's death, but who refused to believe the news. Queer letters, penned in the little cabins of ships pounding through perilous seas. Smudges and smears, bad grammar and clumsy phrases, but showing great hearts behind the pens.

Following these in rightful order came the statement of Richard Teeney, later known as Treasure Teeney, sworn to before a Salem magistrate. It told of the meeting with the Princess in the *Cheung-ai* at Canton. Attached to it were the statements of the Princess herself and those of the cashier and president of the Bank of Taiwan.

There was the full account of the inquiry held in Salem immediately after the return of Richard Teeney. The statements of Cy Burling and Alden Hunnewell, of Jane Pettigrew, Doctor Thacher, Captain Mace and Captain Charleton. Also many letters from sailors who had been requested to tell what they knew of the voyage on which Captain Jack Teeney had brought to Salem the Tear of Tao-tang.

And mounted on silk, so that its tattered and much-handled sections could cling together, was the scrap of paper on which Captain Teeney had placed the cryptic message on the day he died—the puzzling, unsolvable message:

litre □ □ M

On the same scrap of paper was written a note made by the magistrate who had conducted the second inquiry. It ran:

"Evidence has been given to show that this word *litre* is the name of a measuring vessel used in France and which contains a little more than a quart of liquid."

Thomas Teeney had a son named Will, and this Will Teeney had the love of the sea in

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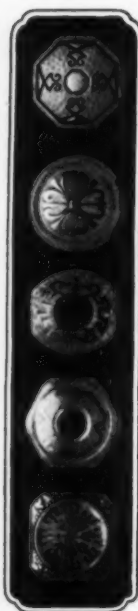


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his blood—grew up somewhat like Captain Jack and Treasure Teeney. He was tall and strong and possessed the ability to handle men. Thomas Teeney wished him to stay in the little drygoods store in Essex Street, but the big waters called young Will.

Thomas Teeney died when young Will was nineteen years of age, and as the boy had shown precious little interest in the papers relating to the Teeney Treasure, the storekeeper willed all the documents to his two sisters Annabel and Faith Teeney, two spinster ladies who lived together in the old Teeney place on the Andover Highroad, the house at the end of the elm avenue in which Captain Jack was shot and robbed.

Two remarkable women were Aunt Annabel and Aunt Faith: both in the fifties, both highly intelligent and capable. The gift of the documents delighted them. They had little to interest them outside the ordinary household duties, and so the mass of carefully arranged letters and papers dealing with the great enigma brought an immense joy into their lives.

As the years passed, they became obsessed with the belief that they were the persons appointed by Fate to solve the great puzzle connected with the disappearance of the Tear of Tao-tang. The matter became their life work. Not that they wished to receive any pecuniary profit from the finding of the great pearl—not a cent! They loved their handsome nephew Will Teeney, and it was the desire to bring happiness to Will that made them pore over the problem. For Will Teeney loved a girl of Salem, a sweet girl named Bessie Forster, in whose company he spent much of his shore leave; and Aunt Annabel and Aunt Faith believed that the finding of the long-lost treasure would enable the two young people to marry and settle down.

For some reason or other a fixed belief entered the minds of both Aunt Annabel and Aunt Faith. They were convinced that Captain Jack Teeney had fooled the murderers. How or why this belief got into their minds, they could not explain, but it was there. At the finish of the nightly consultation over the letters and papers, there would be an exchange of stubborn beliefs. At bedtime either Aunt Annabel or Aunt Faith would say: "Nothing can shake my belief that Grandfather Teeney fooled the murderous scoundrels!" And to this remark Aunt Faith or Aunt Annabel, according to whose lot the supporting statement fell, would say: "There is no other logical conclusion."

One or the other would then raise the lamp, and both would glance up at the portrait of Captain Jack Teeney which hung above the mantel. A splendid portrait of the dashing clipper-ship captain. And curiously, so it seemed to the two women, the lamplight brought to the face of the long-dead skipper a humorous grin as if the portrait heard and concurred.

Young Will Teeney, amused at the concentration and efforts of his aunts, christened them playfully Aunt *Sherlock* Teeney and Aunt *Watson* Teeney, and he joked with Bessie Forster about the efforts of the two women to solve the puzzle.

Bessie, who had been permitted to sit in and listen to some of the nightly consultations, was not inclined to laugh at the efforts of Aunt Annabel and Aunt Faith. "They're awfully wise," she would say.

"Sure, they're wise," young Will would answer, "but that old pearl is lost forever to the Teeney clan. Great-grandfather Teeney should have jammed it into a safe-deposit box the moment he climbed off his ship. Hauling a pearl worth seventy thousand dollars over the Andover Highroad at midnight seems a fool thing to do."

THERE came an evening in May, 1916, when Will Teeney, third officer of the *Star of India*, rushed from the docks at East

Boston to the North Station and flung himself aboard the eight-ten train for Salem. It was raining when the train pulled out of Boston, and the downpour had increased when the train reached its destination. Will Teeney hired a hack and drove out to the Teeney place, where his two aunts and Bessie Forster awaited his arrival.

The three women danced attendance on the young officer. They took his wet overcoat and jacket; they inquired about wet shoes and wet socks, and they fed him as they worried him with questions. Aunt Faith Teeney was a wonderful cook, and Will Teeney, with the appetite that comes from long study of an oil tramp's menu, did full justice to what was put before him.

AT last the meal was disposed of. Will Teeney lit a cigar, after asking permission, and seated himself in the big armchair that was specially reserved for his visits. Vaguely he sensed a little extra excitement in the conduct of his aunts and his sweetheart, and he waited quietly. Something had happened. He watched with a half-smile on his face the hurried clearing away of plates and dishes, noted the little whisperings between Aunt Annabel and Aunt Faith, the happy flush upon the face of Bessie Forster.

At last the supper things were stowed to the satisfaction of the two spinsters. They motioned Bessie to a chair beside Will, while they took two chairs immediately before their handsome nephew.

It was Aunt Annabel who, after a portentous silence, made the opening statement. "You know," she began, addressing her nephew, "that Faith and I have always held to a belief that your great-grandfather fooled the brutes who murdered him."

"I know that has been your opinion," said Will, a little impressed by the manner in which his aunt spoke.

"We have thought so since the papers and documents came into our hands," continued Aunt Annabel. "Never for a moment have we wavered in our belief. Have we, Faith?"

"Never," said Aunt Faith. "Never for a moment."

Will Teeney's cigar lost all attraction for him. He watched Aunt Annabel. He had never seen the old lady look so solemn and important. He leaned forward in his chair.

"Eight weeks ago," went on Aunt Annabel, "Faith made a suggestion that—"

"I think it was you, dear," murmured Faith.

"No, no, it was you," insisted Annabel.

"You based your belief on the evidence of Doctor Thacher given at the inquest on Captain Teeney. Do you recall Doctor Thacher's evidence, Will?"

"I'm sorry to say I don't," answered Will Teeney. "I never studied those papers much."

"Well, Doctor Thacher told at the inquest," explained Aunt Annabel, "that your great-grandfather, when first given the pen and paper, wrote down the word '*litre*' and made the two little squares. It was when the paper was handed back to him that he made with great difficulty the capital *M* that follows the two squares but is *just* a little below them. Your great-grandfather was dying at the moment."

Aunt Annabel Teeney paused, and Will asked a question. "What was Aunt Faith's suggestion?" he demanded.

"Faith suggested that the paper had been turned as it was given back to your great-grandfather," answered Annabel. "He, being in a dying condition, did not see this, and the letter which we have always supposed to be an '*M*' simply because it followed the word '*litre*' is not an '*M*' at all."

"What is it?"

"It's a '*W*.'"

Aunt Annabel Teeney rose, walked to the desk in the corner of the cozy room, and returned with a bundle of papers. On the



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top of the bundle was the silk-mounted sheet on which Captain Jack Teeney had constructed the great puzzle a few moments before his death.

"You will see that the letter which we think is a W is just a little below the word 'litre' and the two squares," explained Aunt Annabel. "It is probable that Captain Teeney didn't see the word and the squares when he started to write down the name of his murderer."

"His murderer?" cried Will.

"Or murderers," said Aunt Annabel. "We think there were two of them. They had the same name. Half-brothers who lived in Salem."

"And you know their names?" asked Will Teeney.

Aunt Annabel Teeney nodded. In the silence that followed, the four occupants of the parlor heard the roar of the rain upon the roof of the Teeney place. It was a wild night without.

Aunt Annabel continued. "In the list of the crew there was no name that started with a W," she said. "Not one. Faith and I then started to make inquiries into the relatives of the crew. We tried to find out if one of them had a relative whose name began with the letter which Captain Teeney put upon this sheet of paper."

"And you found one?" gasped Will.

"Yes. We found that the cabin boy of *The Green Mermaid* was a nephew of two men whose name began with the letter W, and they, according to the belief held by Faith and myself, were the murderers. They were not suspected."

"And they got the pearl?" cried Will Teeney. "They got the Tear of Tao-tang?"

"We don't think so," answered Aunt Annabel. "Their place was mortgaged at the time, and we find from the records that they were thrown out of it four months after Captain Teeney's death. Their children were poor; their children's children were poor; and the one grandchild in Salem today is as poor as a church mouse. It seemed to us that our belief that your great-grandfather had fooled his murderers was strengthened by hunting up the history of these two. They—"

"But who got the pearl?" cried Will Teeney. "If they shot him down in the avenue, what happened to the treasure? Have you—have you formed any opinion on that matter?"

AUNT ANNABEL stroked her black silk apron. For a minute she did not answer. The moment that she and her sister had dreamed of for years had arrived, and she wished to make the most of it. She dallied with the great d  nouement.

"I think your Aunt Faith should have the honor of telling this part of the story," she said softly. "It was Faith again who pounced upon the little clue—"

"No, no, no!" protested Aunt Faith. "I simply read the lines in the letter from the Princess—"

"Well, that was the important part of the discovery," cried Annabel. "If you hadn't found out about the nest, we would not have guessed."

"What nest?" demanded Will Teeney. "Tell me!"

"The nest of boxes," answered his aunt. "In one of the letters written by the Princess after your great-grandfather's death, she says— Wait, I will read it to you! Here it is! Listen! 'I have still the six little boxes of the eight you bought for me in *Tai-s  n-kai*. I treasure them, beloved.'"

Will Teeney frowned. "Well?" he questioned, as his aunt glanced at him. "What did you and Aunt Faith make out of that?"

"We had the red lacquer box that was found beside Captain Teeney examined," replied his aunt.

"Yes, yes," said Will impatiently.

"The expert in Boston said that it was one of a nest of boxes," said Aunt Annabel. "You know those sets of little boxes that the Chinese and Japanese make. One fits into the other."

"Yes, I know. How does that agree—"

"There were two that the Princess did not have," interrupted Annabel, "and we came to the conclusion that the two little squares that Captain Jack Teeney drew on this sheet of paper—one square a little smaller than the other—represented the two missing out of the full set of eight. She, the Princess, had given them to him when she gave him the pearl. One of them was found beside him. We have it here."

She placed upon the table the little red lacquer box that was found beside the unfortunate clipper-ship captain on the morning after the murderous attack. It rested in the flood of light thrown by the parlor lamp, a pathetic, foreign-looking object that held the eyes of the three women and the young man. In a soft silence they stared at it, as if there was an unspoken belief that it would, in some magical manner, explain the mystery of Captain Teeney's death. The patter of the rain came plainly to the ears of the watchers.

"The Princess had six boxes of the eight that Captain Teeney bought," said Aunt Annabel, speaking slowly and distinctly. "Here is what Faith and I think is the seventh. Where is the eighth?"

WILL TEENEY swallowed nervously.

He looked from Aunt Annabel to Aunt Faith, and then to the girl he loved. There was to be a further d  nouement. Of that he was certain. The full tale of the discoveries made by his aunts had not been told.

"Where is the eighth?" he asked suddenly. "Why—why, you know where it is! I can see it on the face of each of you!"

Aunt Annabel Teeney reached out her hand and picked up the little red box. She looked at her nephew, made a gesture as if she would answer his question, then turned and looked at her sister. "I'm afraid to tell him what we think, Faith!" she gasped. "Why—why, now that I have told him this much, it seems nonsense. Horrible nonsense! We—we are just a pair of silly old maids—"

"Oh, stop that!" protested Will Teeney. "Don't kick yourself, Aunt Annabel. You've done famously. That's darned clever reasoning. You're on the right trail, I think. You've made a guess at something else, haven't you?"

"Faith has," said Aunt Annabel softly.

"Let's hear it," said Will.

"We're afraid it might be wrong."

"What if you are wrong?"

"But if—"

"Yes, I know you think I'm all keyed up with the belief that the pearl is going to drop right into my hands. I'm not. Shoot your guess, Aunt Annabel."

"Faith thought," began Annabel Teeney, "that the place at which your great-grandfather turned in the elm avenue might have something to do with the word 'litre' that he wrote down on this sheet. He turned and went back to the murderers, you know. And the place where he turned—you know it, don't you? Well, there is a dwarfed tree there. It never grew up like the others. And its trunk is hollow. Well, Faith thought—you see the letter 'f' is not joined to the 't'—so Faith thought—this only came into her mind this evening—she thought that your great-grandfather might have been trying to write the words 'little tree.' She thinks that the eighth box of the nest that he bought for—for the Princess, might have been tossed into that hollow trunk when—when he found that he was followed!"

It was all told now. And the effect upon Aunt Annabel and Aunt Faith was sur-

prising. Their confidence in their deductions fled as Annabel stammered out the concluding words. A look of intense fear appeared on the faces of both. They were afraid that they had put forward a theory that was ridiculous, a theory that would raise false hopes in the breast of the handsome young man who leaned toward them, his eyes bright with excitement, his lips slightly parted.

Aunt Annabel Teeney started to stammer out a warning to Will, bidding him not to place too much reliance in the solution they had put forward, but her words of caution were interrupted. A loose board on the piazza creaked noisily.

Will Teeney sprang to his feet. With a swift, catlike bound he reached the door and flung it open. The light from the parlor lamp lit up the wet piazza, and in the illuminated wedge stood a tall, shambling man whose shabby clothes spoke eloquently of the wetness of the night.

"What is it?" snapped Will. "What is it you want?"

The fellow stumbled forward and peered into the room. His small, squirming eyes shouldered the bony ridge of nose as if anxious to get close to each other for mutual comfort. The eyes discovered Aunt Annabel Teeney, who had risen from her seat and was standing directly behind her nephew.

"I want to tell her somethin'," growled the man, lifting a long freckled claw and pointing it accusingly at the woman. "I want to tell her that she better mind her own business instead o' makin' inquiries about my people. What's my grandfather got to do with her? What game is she up to? That's what I'd like to know?"

Aunt Annabel Teeney took a step forward. Her thin lips were compressed. There was a cold contempt in her voice as she spoke. "I am not interested in your people, Tom Whipple," she said. "I have no desire to learn anything about them."

"Then what are you askin' questions for?" snarled the fellow at the door. "I know you did! You been lookin' up records an' things. You've been askin' about Gran'pop, an' I want to know what you're doin' it for, an'—"

Will Teeney took a step forward, seized the wet visitor by the elbow and collar of the coat, turned him swiftly and thrust him none too kindly down the brick-paved path.

Whipple flung a curse over his shoulder as he shambling off into the night. Will Teeney stepped back into the parlor and closed the door. His face was white and hard as he turned to his aunts.

"So it—it was the Whipples that did it, eh?" he demanded.

"We—we think so," stammered Aunt Annabel. "Tom's grandfather and his grandfather's brother—Daniel and Isaac Whipple. They lived down near the wharf, and their nephew, Peter Dunham, was cabin boy on *The Green Mermaid*. He must have seen the pearl!"

The little silence that followed this statement was broken by a cry of alarm from Aunt Faith Teeney. "That man heard what we said!" she screamed. "He must have been listening at the window! The loose board is there! Quick! Quick! He knows what we think!"

HATLESS and coatless, Will Teeney at once dashed out into the elm avenue. The rain poured down, but he didn't feel it. The mania that had possessed his father and grandfather had suddenly taken possession of him. He, like Treasure Teeney and the small, mouse-like drygoods man of Essex Street, wished to hold within his hands the Tear of Tao-tang.

The elm avenue was as dark as a tomb, but Will Teeney had played in it as a child and knew every inch of it. Aunt Faith had thought the words stood for "little tree,"

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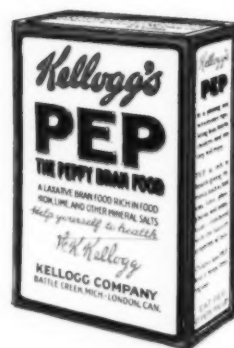
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and the "little tree" was the eighth on the left from the highroad. Out of the night came the sounds of running feet. Will Teeney increased his speed. He slipped, fell upon his face and hands, picked himself up and ran on. Some one else was making for the tree, some one who suspected that it held the treasure that had been lost for over half a century.

Will Teeney swung to the left, hands thrust out as he groped blindly for the tree-trunk. He touched it, and as he did so, a fist came out of the darkness and landed squarely between his eyes. The force of the blow brought him to his knees. As he fell, he heard the scratching sound made by the hand of the unseen who was clawing out of the hollow tree-trunk the decayed leaves that the winds of fifty years had swept into it.

Will Teeney reached out and grasped the legs of Tom Whipple. He exerted all his strength. With a string of oaths the tall, shambling descendant of Daniel and Isaac came down on top of the young officer. Teeney chuckled as he felt for the other's throat. At that moment he felt that the

spirits of Captain Jack and of Treasure Teeney were helping him. His iron fingers gripped the long neck of his antagonist and choked him into insensibility.

Will Teeney got to his feet. He saw the swaying light of a lantern on the avenue, heard the voices of Aunt Annabel, Aunt Faith and Bessie Forster as they came hurrying from the house to his assistance.

He thrust his arm into the hollowed trunk of the tree. He clawed at the wet leaves and decayed fiber. Handful after handful he drew out, rubbed swiftly between hard fingers and dropped it on the ground.

Aunt Annabel Teeney cried out as the three women came near. Will answered her in a voice that he hardly recognized. The man on the ground stirred, tried feebly to clutch at Teeney's legs. The young officer kicked at him viciously. It was his turn at the treasure chest.

Aunt Annabel Teeney, lantern in hand, led the three women. She lifted the lantern as she approached the tree. She heard her nephew laugh, a strange laugh that startled her.

"Will! Will!" she cried. "What's happened?"

"Lift the light!" he gasped. "Higher! Higher! Great God, I have it! Aunt, I have it!"

His fingers had squashed the pulp of a small box, and out of the wet mush, like a strange and ghostly thing emerged the Tear of Tao-tang.

Gasping with joy, the young man thrust the wonderful pearl toward his Aunt Annabel. "It—it is yours!" he cried. "It—"

"No, no, no!" cried Annabel Teeney. "Our dream was to find it for you. It is yours. It came to your great-grandfather from the Princess."

"And it shall go to another princess," said Will Teeney softly. "To a princess who is sweeter than all others."

He took a step forward and placed the Tear of Tao-tang in the little hands of Bessie Forster, while Aunt Annabel and Aunt Faith, standing close together, wept gently. And in that moment of great joy not one of the four had eyes for Tom Whipple, the descendant of a murderer, who crept on all fours out of their range and went staggering down the avenue in the darkness toward the Andover Highroad.

TWO FLIGHTS UP

(Continued from page 45)

vulgarity; she seemed indeed rather to like it. It was perhaps her idea of a gesture toward truth, after a lifetime of polite evasions.

And probably it was. James' honesty was his outstanding quality; he had a tremendous pride in it.

"You can tell them," he had said during the strange days of their courtship, "that I'm no great shakes as to money or position, but you can tell 'em too for me that by God I'm honest. And that's more than they can say."

Which was, by the way, the only reference he had ever made to Margaret concerning the presence of her brother-in-law in the penitentiary.

They lived very simply. They had three rooms, a bath and a kitchenette, and Margaret never got over the sensation of extravagance when she let the tub fill with hot water; taking a bath "at home" as she still called the Bayne house, had required deliberation and preparation. The furniture had come from "the store," at a discount, and in the evenings, after her bath, Margaret would put on a bright pink kimono and sit in front of her shiny dressing-table and brush the long heavy hair which was her only beauty.

James would be reading the paper in the living-room, and the odor of his cigar would come in through the doorway. It still seemed to her incredible that a man—her man—was in the next room, with the door open between.

Sometimes he would call in. He had taken to reading the society columns.

"I see your cousins the Sam Parkers are going abroad."

"Really? They're leaving the children with the governess, I dare say."

Or:

"Mrs. Willoughby-Jones is giving a luncheon, Margaret. Ask you?"

"No. Why on earth should she?"

"Well, why shouldn't she?" he would grumble. "I guess you're as good as anybody she'll have there."

And Margaret would smile at his belligerent tone.

ON the day Holly's engagement was announced in the papers, James took one with him to the store and showed it around proudly.

"Seen this, Smith?" he would say. "My wife's niece. She's marrying young Brooks; father was Schuyler Brooks, you know."

To which the department responded in kind. Smith, or Jones, would call James and show him a tablecloth.

"See this tablecloth, Cox?" he would say. "Just sold it to young Mrs. Maginnis; mother was a Flaherty, you know."

And James took his ragging cheerfully.

He adored Margaret. Beyond his wife, his home and his department in the store he had no life, and wished none. He liked his world to be within the reach of his arms.

It was to this humble terrain, then, that the battle of the Bayne pride was to shift, and that right speedily. They had come in from the movies, and Margaret was in front of her toilet-table. She looked up, and James was in the doorway with the newspaper in his hand.

"See here," he said, "did you know that there was a move on to get Tom Bayne out of the pen?"

"My goodness, no!"

"Well, there is. Or was."

"They're not going to let him out?"

"The pardon's granted. Kidneys gone wrong or something. Say he's a dying man."

"Oh, James!" she wailed. "What will they do? And Holly's wedding next month!"

"I thought you didn't want that wedding."

"Well, they want it. At least—"

"At least the old lady does, eh? Well, that's neither here nor there. I just want to say this, Margaret: He's not to come here bothering you, or me either. I'm not trafficking with crooks."

She did not resent it. She knew his frightful honesty, and she liked his masterfulness.

"I don't think he'll bother us, James. But what they're to live on I don't know."

"Let him get out and work. Dig ditches or run a street-car. That may hurt his pride, but it's honest."

"If he's sick—"

"Oh, fiddledee! he grunted. "Sick, nothing. That's the old dodge to get him out. Everything goes but flat feet."

But later on he felt that perhaps he had been a trifle violent, and after they were in bed, he put a hand over and caught hers. He felt carefully for her worn forefinger and stroked it gently.

"Maybe I said too much," he whispered, "but he left you to slave for them there. I hate his very insides."

He went to sleep soon after, but Margaret lay awake, wide-eyed and anxious. The satin had come for Holly's wedding dress,

and already she had cut it out. It was very wonderful satin, but she wondered now if it would ever be used. If only she hadn't cut it!

She was not the only one who lay awake. Indeed, save Mrs. Bayne and James, none of the characters in the approaching drama got much sleep at all.

HOLLY'S world had suddenly crashed beneath her feet, and the very figure of stability, her mother, had destroyed it. Holly might have been whirling through space, with her father and her mother and Furness, and the children at school who used to howl after her, all whirling about her. When she dropped to sleep, it was to have the sensation of falling, and to waken damp with the sweat of terror. Once she roused thus and sat up in bed to see two shining eyes fixed on her from across the room.

It was some time before she realized that they were the paste buckles on a pair of slippers on her dressing-table, a part of her mother's purchases that day.

Through it all, however, there was one figure that did not move, or whirl. It was as steady as one of the fixed stars. When her tired brain refused the hundred crowding chaotic thoughts, it seized on this for rest and peace: Warrington, solid and gravely dependable, and saying: "You are everything in the world to me."

Toward morning she fell into heavy sleep, from which she was roused by the ringing of the doorbell. Her mother was stirring, across the hall, and Holly opened her door and spoke to her.

"I'll go down," she said. "Go back to bed, Mother."

"Don't let anyone in until you know who it is," said Mrs. Bayne. There was a curious catch in her voice, and even in the haste of getting down and opening the front door, Holly noticed it.

As if it had been lying in the back of her mind all the time the thought sprang out at her: "Suppose there was something more in selling that bond than just taking what

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didn't belong to one? Suppose there was—risk?"

"Who's there?" she called with her hand on the knob. "What do you want?"

"Telegram," was the laconic answer. She opened the door, and after signing the book, read the message. She knew, as she stood there, that her mother was in the hall above, listening and perhaps trembling.

"It's just a telegram, Mother," she called up reassuringly.

"A telegram? What about?"

"The pardon's been granted. He'll be coming home, Mother, as soon as he can travel."

Suddenly and without warning Mrs. Bayne burst into tears.

Chapter Eleven

WARRINGTON had carried down the suitcase and placed it in his closet. He felt no desire to examine its contents. Rather, he had an extreme repugnance to so doing. It occurred to him, grimly enough, that if the bond he had sold had been identified, the last place he should choose for the suitcase was his closet.

Outside of that, and his yearning pity for Holly, his attention was mainly directed to Mrs. Bayne and her temptation. Had Holly been right, and had she discovered the hiding-place by accident? Or had she known it all along? Stranger things than that had happened, he knew; but the idea of Mrs. Bayne as *particeps criminis* was hardly tenable.

No. He preferred Holly's theory. It was more like her. He could even see her moving the trunk into a better light, and perhaps a board lifting, a giving under her feet. Then the discovery, and the temptation; sitting there, perhaps, on the trunk itself, staring at the papers in her hand; putting on her gold *pince-nez* and carefully reading; understanding, finally, and her soft relaxed chin working.

He could even follow the reasoning of her worldly yet childlike mind. It was all over so long ago, and Bayne had paid the penalty. So had she. So had Holly. They had paid once; were they to pay again? And the bank had not suffered permanently. It was more prosperous now than ever.

But she had been canny, too. She had not tried to sell the bond herself. She had given it to him to sell. For all her ignorance she had known enough for that. Lying there sleepless, he began quite definitely to put the burden of responsibility on Mrs. Bayne. Probably, in that long ago, she had lived beyond their means and so precipitated the catastrophe. And now she had not only yielded to temptation; she had not scrupled to use him.

Holly had got hold of the wrong end of the stick. It was Mrs. Bayne who had let the lot down, her husband, her sister, her child, and now himself.

He bathed and dressed absently the next morning, absorbed in his problem. It struck him rather humorously that the mere matter of carrying the securities was a delicate one. Suppose the bond had been recognized and traced to him? Wasn't there a charge of receiving stolen goods? But even without that, suppose he met Mrs. Bayne on the stairs. What would he do, or say? Or she?

After he was dressed he got out the suitcase and laid it on his bed. It had some old foreign labels on it, and he regarded them with mixed feelings.

"So you've traveled, have you?" he reflected. "But of course you would. That was a part of the game, the whole damned snobbish game."

He wandered to the window and looked down into the quiet street. And a large but lightly stepping gentleman who had been eying the house from the opposite pave-

ment leisurely lit a cigarette and moved on. Warrington did not notice him.

STILL at a loss, he left the suitcase and went down the stairs, to find Holly patiently waiting for him in the lower hall. The strong morning light streamed in through the glass of the front door, and brought out painfully her thinness and the tired lines about her eyes.

"I couldn't go up to your room," she said. "She's awake, and not very well."

"You still want me to get it out of the house?"

"Yes. That's all I can think of. You see, my father is coming back. He's been ill, and so they're letting him out. Or maybe he hasn't been ill; maybe he's just pretending. I don't know." She smiled up at him painfully. "You see what it's done to me. I don't believe much in anything just now."

"You can believe in me," he said sturdily. "You have to have one anchor, and I'm it."

"I do believe in you."

But she did not look up.

Her idea was that he take the suitcase to Margaret's and leave it there until he had seen the bank officials.

"You can't do anything else with it," she said. "I've thought and thought. You see, the lock's broken, and anybody might open it."

"All right," he consented. "I'll put some heavy twine around it, and then you can give me the address and the thing's done. And now you're to stop worrying! It's all fixed and everybody's happy. I'll get a taxi and clear out."

"If she heard a taxi, she'd get up and look out. She might think it was—Father."

"All right," he agreed, indomitably cheerful for her benefit. "Then I won't get a taxi! Much as I dislike the plebeian street-car—"

As he went up the stairs, he confronted Mrs. Bayne.

"I thought I heard voices," she said plaintively. "Is Holly down there?—I want my tray, Holly."

"Yes, Mother."

He had to wait above until Mrs. Bayne had retired and closed her door. Then he went down, suitcase in hand. The Cox's address was on a slip of paper on the table, and he took it and went out.

Had he been less absorbed in his errand, he would have noticed that the large but lightly stepping gentleman followed him onto the car.

Margaret was at home. Before he rang the bell of the little apartment, he could hear her singing inside. Coming down, he had not given much thought to Margaret, save as to what he should tell her, but the singing gave him a surprise. He had never heard her sing before. He had somehow never thought of her as singing.

He had an instant picture of her on that kitchen floor months ago, of her silk stockings and beaded slippers, of the neatness of the organdie collar around her almost pulseless neck. And now she was singing.

Life was queer. It was darned queer.

SHE opened the door herself, a strange Margaret, lit with happiness like a torch; a fulfilled Margaret, calm and unashamed.

"Why, upon my word!" she said. "Come in. I was just sweeping."

He went in and deposited his suitcase on the floor, while Margaret eyed it curiously.

"I'm playing errand-boy this morning," he told her. "I'm to leave this here, and Holly will be in later to explain."

Neither he nor Margaret noticed this use of Holly's given name.

"Is it the lace? If that's all lace—"

"Oh!" he said, grinning cheerfully at her. "I forgot one thing. You're not to

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DESERVING of sympathy is the woman who shrinks from the facts of life, who is cut off from the knowledge possessed by other women around her. Because her false modesty robs her of membership in the intimate Bond of Womanhood. How can such a woman learn the truth about so personal a subject as feminine hygiene? How can she know that the great risk to women today comes from the use of poisonous antiseptics like bichloride of mercury and carbolic acid in its various forms?

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open it. You are to promise. Cross your heart, you'll put it in a closet and leave it there, until further instructions."

Margaret smiled in return.

"But what is it?"

"I'll tell you," he said, lowering his voice. "It's a bomb, a clockwork bomb. Since you married Mr. Cox, I have been consumed by a burning jealousy, and now I propose to do away with Mr. Cox."

She laughed outright then, and her laughter was as strange and surprising as her singing.

"Then I shall put it in his closet," she said. "And it will destroy his rows and rows of shoes. That will be your revenge, for he is frightfully vain about his feet. Of course he has to be on them all day, and to change his shoes rests him."

She took him around to see the flat, leading him first into the bedroom, where she placed the suitcase in James' closet and showed him the tidy line-up of shoes. And after the shoes she showed him the further extravaganzas of James' neckties.

"Look!" she said. "Did you ever see so many ties?"

"Look like the wealth of Ormus and of India to me."

But after he had seen it all, the imitation ivory toilet-set which had been a recent gift, the shining kitchen, and had even opened a tap to show how hot the water ran, she turned to him with a different note in her voice—as if the Margaret who had married James Cox had retired, and the Margaret of the old house was back again.

"Do you know they are letting Tom Bayne out?"

"I learned it this morning."

"But it's dreadful. What will they do? And what will Furness Brooks think about it?"

A hot wave of anger flushed him.

"What the deuce would he think? He's known about it all along, hasn't he?"

"I know. But people had forgotten it, and now it's all brought up again. And a church wedding! Her father can't give her away."

He controlled his voice with an effort.

"If he thinks about that at all, then he doesn't deserve her. And if he doesn't deserve her, I hope to God he doesn't get her."

His sudden anger surprised him. He had thought he had schooled himself better, and Margaret's eyes were wide.

"What I mean is," he said, more quietly, "you and I can't help that, can we? We'll have to let it work itself out."

Just inside the entrance door stood Margaret's work-basket, and a piece of heavy ivory-white satin lay on the top of it. As he was taking his leave, his eyes fell on it, and when he stopped outside at the elevator to light a cigarette, his hands were shaking.

"I'm in fine shape," he told himself grimly. "Shot to pieces, by heck! I'll have to stop smoking."

And comforted by that masculine panacea for all ills, went down and out into the street. As with most such resolutions, however, he forgot it almost at once, and a short time after lit another cigarette for the mere pleasure of observing that his hands were all right again!

BY the time he reached the bank he had managed to concentrate on his business there. But the concentration did him very little good. That distinguished citizen and president of the reorganized Harrison Bank, Mr. Samuel Parker, had just sailed for Europe. This from the door-man. And inside the bank an absent-looking youth raised his eyes from figures of incredible size to tell him that the vice president was down with influenza.

"What's the cashier's name?" he asked, irritably resorting to somewhat smaller fry. "Gilbert. He's on jury duty just now."

"Then who the hell's running this bank?" he demanded. But the absent youth went back to his figures, and Warrington retreated to the street, uneasy and at a loss. How about going to the district attorney? But that meant the law, and probably publicity; he had a cynical belief that district attorneys thrived on publicity. No, that wouldn't do. He'd have to wait till he could manage to think things out.

It was in this frame of mind that he bumped into a passer-by and angrily told him to look out what he was doing. And the passer-by snapped back: "Look out yourself, you darned fool!"

It was Furness Brooks.

Chapter Twelve

FURNESS had been in a state of rage since the announcement in the papers the evening before of Bayne's approaching release.

By direct appeal he had managed to engineer a few callers to the Bayne house, but as time went on, it became more and more clear to him that he could not force them back into society. And for all his lack-luster eyes, he was shrewd enough. He knew that his present semi-popularity was due largely to the demand for unattached men at dinners, and the bits of gossip he could carry from one tea-table to another.

With the failure of his campaign, therefore, it was plain to him that this popularity would cease with his marriage. Some men held on, he knew, but that was because they had married girls who could hold up their own end in the frivolous give and take of smart groups. With the same clear view he took of himself he knew that Holly would never do that.

"Why don't you smoke?" he asked her once. "Everybody does, you know."

"I have tried. I hate it."

He brought her a long shell cigarette-holder one day, and as dutifully as she did everything those days, she tried it.

"You hold it like a fountain pen, honey!"

"Well, how on earth should one hold the thing?" she demanded. And then, sorry for her tone: "You can't make me over, you know, Furness."

She had managed part of a cigarette, and then put it down.

Nor did he try to fool himself as to Holly's attitude to him. He had made no real headway with her. He could still feel the recoil as he put his arms around her, and her unconscious effort to get away.

"Don't you like me to hold you?"

"But I feel so silly!"

"It isn't silly to be in my arms."

In the light-hearted but seriously pleasure-hunting group he knew best, girls gave their kisses so easily that they lost value. A caress had no more significance to them than a handclasp, hardly as much. Holly's withdrawals therefore had the effect of stimulating his passion for her, and his vanity refused to admit the reason for them.

And the trap closed down. He brought her presents, sent her flowers. Mostly he saw her in the afternoons, as he was hurrying home to dress for a dinner somewhere afterward; holding desperately to his place in the sun, trying to have his cake and eat it too.

He had a fair income. His apartment was of the studio type, and now and then he sent out cards, and his Filipino servant Miguel brought in an assistant or two and he gave a party. Somebody sang, or he had a pianist and they danced, and the pantry became an extemporized bar. They were gay but sufficiently decorous, and they had had a certain vogue.

He had intended to give one for Holly after the engagement was announced, but the

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failure of his other campaign killed that idea. "Afterward, if they want me, they will have to take her too," he reflected. But he was not as certain as he pretended to himself that "they" would want him. Like James, he used the word "they" rather often.

ON the same evening, then, that James saw the announcement that Tom Bayne had been pardoned, Furness saw it, read it carefully and flung down the paper angrily.

A dead scandal was one thing; a resurrected scandal in a morning coat, still with the prison pallor on its face, walking up the aisle at St. Andrews, was another. Of course it wouldn't be; the Baynes had too much sense for that. It simply meant no wedding. It meant going to the City Hall or wherever one did go, and going through a for a while more or less clandestinely. It meant—oh, hell!

He got into his dinner clothes morosely. At the Willoughby-Jones', where he was dining, he thought a small silence followed the announcement of his name, but conversation started again almost at once. He moved from group to group, watching with his pale blue eyes for any reservation, any indication of the social ticker that his stock had gone down. But there was none; society has its weaknesses, but it is well bred. It ignores what it cannot cover.

It was after dinner, when the men moved in a body from the library to rejoin the women, that he had his first words with his hostess.

"I suppose you've seen it, Furney?"

"Yes."

"What are you going to do about it?"

"What is there to do? Of course the church wedding's off."

"But you're going through with it?"

"I'd hardly call it that," he said, showing a certain resentment. "The marriage will go on, naturally. It will be quiet, that's all."

"And you'll be quiet afterward," said Mrs. Willoughby-Jones. "I'm being brutal for your own good, Furney. How many evenings do you dine at home now? How are you going to get along without all this?" She gestured toward the crowded, noisy room with her fan. "How long will it last?"

"As long as I can make it last," he said doggedly. But he was not so sure.

He won quite a little money that night at bridge, and somebody said to him:

"Does your—does Miss Bayne play?"

"No. She doesn't," he admitted.

There was a silence after that, and he went on playing his hand. But it came to him that all these people, all his world, disapproved of his marriage and expected it to fail. It roused something obstinate in him.

"I'll show them," he told himself. "They're not marrying her; I am."

And he felt a warm and voluptuous glow. It persisted until the small hours, when he finally pocketed his winnings and started home, and it drove him out of his way in his car to pass the Bayne house on Kelsey Street.

The house, as he had expected, was dark, but out of a small dormer window on the top floor there came a faint glow of light.

He concluded that "Hilda" was keeping late hours!

Chapter Thirteen

WITH the suitcase out of the house Holly felt that she could breathe again. She carried up her mother's tray, and coaxed her to eat some breakfast, but Mrs. Bayne was querulous and depressed.

"If they had only kept him another month!" she said. "Take this thing away; I can't eat with this hanging over my head."

"Still, if he is really ill—"

"They have doctors there, and a hospital.

A good hospital. I've seen it. Anyway, I don't believe he's so ill. He's only been doing clerical work there; he's had it easy enough."

"You don't really feel that way, Mother."

"Certainly I do. Another month or so wouldn't have hurt him after all these years. And he knows about the wedding. I sent him the announcements from the papers."

"Let's not think about the wedding just now. We'll have to make some plans. I can move up to Aunt Margaret's room, and he can have mine. I'll fix the bed now and get ready."

"You can't go to Margaret's room. I'm not going to have you on the same floor with that wretched man. I've seen the way he looks at you. I'm not blind."

Holly's pale face flushed.

"Father can't climb all those stairs. And"—she hesitated—"I don't suppose you want him in here?"

"You can put up the cot in the nursery."

It was still the nursery, after all these years. "Very well," said Holly quietly. "That's what I'll do. But I'll go there myself, Mother. It's quite comfortable."

She went out, taking the tray with her. She was hardly capable of consecutive thought, but there was room in her mind for a great thankfulness. The suitcase and all it contained was gone, and downtown that portion of her trouble at least was being straightened out. True, she dreaded the moment when Mrs. Bayne would go to the attic again and find out what had happened. Not that there would be a scene. The very facts precluded that. But there would be a shock.

She tried to think of some way to avoid that shock, but without success.

The morning wore on. She worked hard; but then, she was accustomed to that. Now and then the relation of the new situation to her marriage obtruded itself, but she drove it away. Time for that when they came to it. But in the back of her mind she was puzzling over it. How could she go away and leave those two there together? A sick man and an ailing, helpless woman?

For Mrs. Bayne was not well. Holly could not leave her, even to go to Margaret's. At half-past eleven, there being no telephone in the house, she went to Simmons' grocery store and called her up, but the Cox apartment did not answer, and she went back again, vaguely uneasy.

AT noon she carried up another tray. Mrs. Bayne was up in a chair by that time; she looked really ill, but she would not have a doctor.

"Have you heard from Furness yet?"

"No. Of course he's busy, and with no telephone—"

"Just the same, he might have sent you some word. He must know we are anxious."

"I'm not anxious, Mother. If he would let a thing like this keep him away, a thing he always knew had to happen sometime, then it's better to learn it now rather than later on."

At one o'clock, however, there came a box of roses and his card. "Always thine," it read, in his affected manner. She carried the flowers to her mother's room and was completely routed by the relief in Mrs. Bayne's face.

"Then it's all right!" she said. "I really have been terrified, Holly. If anything goes wrong now, I really think it will finish me."

She put her handkerchief to her eyes, that soft bit of fresh linen with her initials in the corner, A. H. B., which was always in her hand. Holly could not remember her mother without a handkerchief; and when later on, one of them played its small part in her story, the mere sight of it was to bring up not only every crisis

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A pipe smoker apologizes for years of hate

Reading, Pa.,
August 29, 1925.

Larus & Bro. Co., Richmond, Va.
Dear Sirs:

For years I have read your advertisements and testimonials and laughed at them—until last month. I am now writing this letter as an apology to Larus & Brother Co.

Prejudiced many years ago when I first started to smoke a pipe against Edgeworth because a hated enemy of mine was a constant smoker of it, I refused to fill any pipe of mine with this tobacco.

I smoked almost every kind of tobacco I could buy but your brand. I was what I call a "gypsy smoker." Sometimes I would find satisfaction for a while, but always the tastes of tobaccos would give me repulsive mouth odors. With some, my mouth would have the feeling that it was the uncleanest thing on earth. Some tobaccos even blistered my tongue.

Price was no object. I had paid as much as eight dollars a pound for my smoking mixtures, but I could find no contentment.

Some time ago I was without my pouch and borrowed a pipe-load from an acquaintance, not asking what kind he smoked. We parted and I lit up. I enjoyed it so much I could not wait until I could ask him what kind it was. It was Edgeworth. I was disappointed, but not too narrow-minded to try a can for myself. For a month now, I have hesitated in writing you, in hopes (again I apologize) that I could find fault with it. But I can't.

At last I am satisfied and I am willing to forget that feeling of animosity towards the man who first prejudiced me against your peerless smoke, for I see now that he had more common sense than I.

So I apologize and thank you for doing something I thought could not be done—giving me a smoke I could really enjoy at all times. We are friends for life.

Sincerely yours,
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Let us send you free samples of Edgeworth so that you may put it to the pipe test. If you like the samples, you'll like Edgeworth wherever and whenever you buy it, for it never changes in quality. Write your name and address to Larus & Brother Company, 8-Q South 21st Street, Richmond, Va.

On your radio—tune in on WRVA,
Richmond, Va.—the Edgeworth station. Wave length 256 meters.

of her life; it was to bring up that life itself, day by day and hour by hour.

"Nothing will go wrong, Mother," Holly told her.

IT was about two o'clock when the bell rang. Mrs. Bayne slept quietly on her couch, a lavender slumber-robe drawn over her, and the scent of the roses heavy in the room. Downstairs, Holly had dusted the drawing-room and laid out the tea-table—if her mother wakened and came down, it would never do for her to find it unready—and was standing in front of an old photograph of her father which she had brought from the disused library across the hall, where like her father himself it had been shelved for many years.

He must not, she reasoned, ever guess that it had been hidden away.

It was out of date now. Mr. Bayne had been taken in his dress clothes, after the fashion of twenty years ago. Over a broad and high expanse of snowy white shirt-bosom and collar he looked into his daughter's eyes, handsome and debonaire.

"Poor Father!" said Holly, and dusting the glass, placed the photograph on a table.

She had not seen him for many years, and she had never known him well, but acting on impulse she went across the hall into the closed library, and wrote a telegram.

"So glad you are coming. Welcome home and much love."

After a little hesitation, she signed both her mother's name and her own.

The library had been his room, as the drawing-room had been her mother's. It was hardly ever opened now; the matter of heating it had been a factor, but Holly knew too that as definitely as her mother had shut her husband out of her life, she had closed and sheeted the room which had been his.

The anger Holly had felt the night before was lost in pity. He had stolen, and he had not only spent; he had hidden away a part of that stolen wealth in that very house. He was dying, and he had made no attempt at restitution. But he was dying; he could not live long.

And then suddenly there came to her mind her mother's face, on the day she came home from the penitentiary; and later on, her suppressed excitement, the times when she had sat like some one who nursed a secret, the haste as to the wedding and the trousseau.

Suppose on that visit of hers he had told her? Suppose she had not happened on the suitcase, but had known it was there? Suppose he had wanted to make restitution, to come back clean, and had told her; and out of her dire need her mother—

She sat up suddenly. The doorbell was furiously ringing.

Chapter Fourteen

JAMES COX was enormously proud of his stock. He liked, when he was not busy, to run his hand down over his tidy shelves, and to realize that he could tell its very quality by touch. And when he opened up the blue wrappers from his best tablecloths, it was as though he gained a vicarious splendor from their quality.

"Wonderful piece of work, this," he would say. "Grace any table! Make any sort of food taste good, eh?"

He was completely out of patience with the new vogue for doilies, although he had to sell them. The nearest thing he had ever come to a quarrel with Margaret was on that very question. He came home one evening to find the table set with small bits of linen, scalloped by her own busy hands, little islands of white in a shining sea of imitation mahogany.

"What's this you've got on the table?"

"Don't you like them?"

"Oh, they're all right," he said grudgingly. He didn't like to hurt her. "But if you ask me, give me honest food on an honest linen cloth."

"Then off they go!" said Margaret, shamelessly and spinelessly loving. "I don't care for them myself. I just thought—"

Honest linen! Honest everything. That was James Cox.

ON the day, then, that Warrington had carried the suitcase to Margaret, James was behind his counter. They had opened up a new shipment in the stock-room, and huge baskets were still being trundled along the aisles.

He was in a state of suppressed excitement, as he was always when new stock came in, and so he did not notice that he was being quietly observed from a near-by counter. Nor was his feeling when he was summoned to the manager's office other than one of irritation at being interrupted. He never saw the light-stepping, rather stout man who followed him there, and unceremoniously entered after him.

The office was empty. James, hearing the door close behind him, turned and confronted this gentleman.

"Your name Cox?" said the stranger.

"Yes."

"Live at Number Eleven, Aurelia Apartments?"

James suddenly stopped breathing. Something had happened to Margaret!

"I do," he stammered. "I live there. What's wrong? For God's sake, what's the matter?"

"Don't get excited, Mr. Cox. Sit down. I only want to ask you some questions."

"My wife—"

"She's all right, so far as I know. Mr. Cox, you are related to a family named Bayne, I believe, on Kelsey Street?"

Mr. Cox had recovered, and now he stiffened.

"Only by marriage. My wife is Mrs. Bayne's sister."

"But you are on pretty friendly terms with the family?"

"Never been in the house," said Mr. Cox, unflinchingly honest. "They don't like me, and I don't like them. The girl's all right," he added conscientiously.

"Do you know a young man named Warrington who has a room there?"

"Never saw him but once," said James. But he looked self-conscious, as well he might, recalling that amazing evening; and the detective saw it.

"But your wife knows him? Rather well?"

"Look here," said Mr. Cox, "I don't know what it's all about, and I don't give a damn. But I want my wife's name left out of this, see?"

The detective knew men, and so he realized the belligerent honesty of James' attitude. It put him at a disadvantage, in a way; you can trap a scoundrel, but there is no trap for the straightforward. However, he tried it.

"What's the use, Mr. Cox? We've got the stuff!"

"What stuff?" roared Mr. Cox. "If you're accusing me of having bootleg stuff in my place, it's a lie. That bottle of brandy was given me ten years ago, and I can prove it."

"We've got the suitcase."

JAMES stared at him, and the detective stared back.

"What suitcase? What about a suitcase?" James demanded, a bit warily. He did not like the look in the other man's face; it was too complacent.

"The one your wife received this morning from the Bayne house. And hid away in your closet."

Mr. Cox was suddenly thinking hard. A suitcase from the Bayne house! Now what

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Oh Henry! Toast for Tea

4 thin slices of white bread
Butter
1 bar of Oh Henry!

Toast the bread a golden brown, remove the crusts, butter thinly, cut into halves and lay on each half very thin slices of Oh Henry! allowing these to almost touch. Place in a hot oven (375 to 400 degrees F.) for 3 or 4 minutes for the Oh Henry! to heat and soften. Serve at once.



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on earth— A suitcase from the Bayne house. Trust that woman to make trouble if she could. A suitcase from the—

"I don't know anything about any suitcase," he said, surly now. "As for my wife hiding anything, she's got nothing to hide, and I'm damn well ready to tell you that. And what business is it of yours, anyhow?"

Amazingly, he was looking at a badge the officer uncovered. James' hands began to sweat. They were cold and clammy. He got out his handkerchief and wiped them.

"I'm telling you. If you don't know about this suitcase, then your wife does, all right."

He considered that warily. They weren't going to catch James Cox napping, not they. And Margaret wasn't going to be in this, not by a darned sight.

"All right," he said. "If there's a suitcase there, and you're interested in it, we'll say it's mine and let it go at that. Now, what about it?"

"That's right," said the detective more affably. "No need of dragging a woman in if we can help it. You admit it's your suitcase?"

"Wait a minute! I'll admit that the only suitcase I know about in the flat is mine, and that's as far as I'll go."

He was rather pleased with this masterpiece of strategy; they hadn't caught him napping. No sir. You had to go some to catch James Cox asleep on his feet. However, the detective, as Mr. Cox now knew him to be, only yawned slightly and looked at his watch.

"If you'll get your hat," he said, "we'll wander over to the City Hall. District Attorney wants to talk to you."

"I'm not free here until twelve-thirty."

"Oh, you're free enough," said the detective amiably. "That's all fixed. You just get your things and come along."

There was an authority in that "come along" that froze Mr. Cox to the marrow of his insignificant bones. But it would never do to show it.

"You seem damned certain I'm coming," he snapped.

"I am damned certain," said the detective.

Chapter Fifteen

HAVING failed in his first plan at the bank, Warrington found himself rather at a loose end. He had no idea what further steps to take. He felt that a legal opinion would help him out, but also that he had no right to take an attorney into his confidence without consulting Holly first.

His own opinion was that although he had planted what amounted to a bomb in the Cox household, there was no reason to believe that anybody was waiting to touch off the fuse.

Nevertheless he had sold a stolen bond, and it was with mixed feelings that he went somewhat belatedly to the office. Everything there was the same as usual, apparently. Hawkins, with a green shade over his eyes, was working at the board, and half a dozen

men sat or stood watching it. The ticker rattled on, like a distant machine-gun; when he had first gone into the office, it often took him back to the war; and Miss Sharp, the stenographer, would catch the far-away look in his eyes.

"Well," she said once, pertly, "you must have enjoyed it, whatever it was. Been to a party?"

"You might call it a party," he told her. "Perhaps it's like a lot of things, pleasanter to remember than to go through with."

"Can you beat that!" she inquired of nobody in particular. "I'll take to remembering when I'm too old for anything else."

Like the cashier at the Red Rose, she found him attractive, and strongly male. "He mayn't be much of a salesman," she said once or twice, "but believe me, he's some man."

He never flirted with her, but he knew she had a good hard brain, and an amazing memory. So that morning it was to her he went for information.

"Put away your book," he said. "I'm not going to give you any letters. I want some information. Do you remember when a man named Bayne got in trouble at the Harrison Bank?"

"Do I remember the San Francisco earthquake! Sure I do." She hedged on that, however. "I was only a kid at the time, but I remember it, all right. Our landlord lost a lot of money, and Ma threw a celebration that night."

However, bit by bit out of a mass of extraneous material, he dug out the story. Bayne had tried to make a get-away, but had failed; he had spent a good bit, but some of it had never been accounted for.

"Maybe he speculated," she said, with a glance at the swinging doors and the group beyond them. "Everybody's doing it."

He had not left the office more than five minutes when they came after him.

"How should I know where he's gone?" Miss Sharp said, eying the detective shrewdly. She hardly needed the sight of the badge to "put her wise," she said later.

"But you're expecting him back this morning?"

"Depends on how far he's gone," she told him. "What's he been doing? Bootlegging, or dodging his income tax?"

"Wait until he comes back, and you'll find out."

She was curious but unanxious.

BUT as luck would have it, Warrington did not go back. He went around to see a certain young man, the only attorney he knew in the city, for he needed advice, and he trusted Meyer's discretion. Meyer, however, was arguing a case at the Court-house, and after waiting an hour for him, he gave up and went away.

Save for a sense of inner urgency, there seemed to be no immediate danger. He decided to think the matter over, and having a prospective customer out of town, he took an interurban car and proceeded half-heartedly to the day's work.

It is rather interesting to note that had he taken a train instead, he would have been under arrest before he knew it. As things were, however, he sat safely enough in the street-car, a big, heavy-shouldered young man, much like any other big and heavy-shouldered young man, save perhaps for a slightly dogged look about his mouth and chin, and a certain grave directness in his eyes. And after a while he resolutely put the Baynes, including Holly, out of his mind and concentrated on the business before him.

He sold five bonds, which netted him the munificent sum of ten dollars. But before he did it, he had had to lunch with the buyer and stop in to see his family.

"Do you good," said the customer. "You

DON MARQUIS

Joyous, mirthful, jocund, amusing, droll and funny, quaint, merry and comic—no, this isn't a quotation from a book of synonyms, but a feeble attempt to suggest the merits of a story by Don Marquis which will appear in an early issue under the title

"Confessions of
a Glass-Eater"



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fellows who sell bonds ought to see what it's all about. I buy bonds to protect my family. So does everybody else. If I wanted to make money, I'd buy stocks."

Not important, all this, save that it made him very late getting back to the city, and that it sent him back rather thoughtful. Whether a fellow sold bonds or bought them, he ought to be working for somebody besides himself.

He drew a long breath, as he sat in the car, and then stirred impatiently. He could see Holly as she had been that morning in the lower hall, thin and wretched; and he could see Margaret Cox, at the end of her rope too, lying down on the kitchen floor to end everything in one last desperate gesture.

But Margaret hadn't. She had had the courage to pull out, and to take happiness where she found it. He did not for a moment believe that Holly would.

Once in the city again, however, his mind returned to the suitcase. He looked at his watch. The banks were closed now, and the office soon would be. Hardly worth while going back. Perhaps he'd better go home and tell Holly what he had done—or rather had not done. He got out and walked across town, and a stray dog from somewhere picked him up and followed along.

It was a wretched creature, emaciated and despondent, but when he stopped and tried to turn it back, it looked up at him with eyes at once so hopeful and so hungry that he finally gave up the attempt. He stopped at a dairy and bought a bottle of milk, as the best way to break his long fast, and with this in a newspaper under his arm, and the dog at his heels, reached the end of Kelsey Street.

Later on, he was to thank this impulse for a few hours' respite—that and his pride, perhaps. For from a block away he saw Brooks' car in front of the house, and was not minded to pass the drawing-room door and that gentleman inside it, with his present *entourage*.

He was irritated as he turned to the right along a side-street, and so along an alley-way to the gate leading into the yard of the house, irritated and depressed.

"I'll get out," he told himself. "That's what I'll do. Get out from under. It's only by chance I'm here anyhow. What the devil would they have done if I hadn't turned up?"

HE slammed the gate so violently that he set the dog to shivering, and ashamed of that, he bent down and stroked its head. He felt better after that, and more gentle, as almost all do who have touched in friendliness a friendless dog. The kitchen door was unlocked, and he got a pan there and took it outside.

"Here, old boy," he said, and poured out the milk.

When this Barmecide feast was over and the animal swollen to the bursting-point, he put it out into the alley. But it whimpered there and scratched at the gate, and at last he let it in again. He found an old piece of carpet and placed it in a sheltered spot under the back steps, and then, and only then, he went into the house.

As he opened the door to the hall, he saw Mrs. Bayne in the front hall with her back to him. She had drawn aside the curtain of the front door and was peering anxiously out, and as she peered, she talked to some one in the drawing-room.

"I really don't understand it, Furness. She hardly ever goes out. And she knew I was not well. She will certainly be back soon."

"Don't worry about it. I can look over the paper."

But she had no intention of letting him look over the paper, apparently. As War-

ington went quietly up the stairs, he could still hear her plaintive, rather exasperated voice.

"What I don't understand," she was saying, "is her not letting me know. I wakened up, and she was gone. Just a note to say she would be back shortly. It's so unlike her."

Warrington himself was somewhat puzzled, but hardly anxious. He washed, and changed his collar as usual, and once he heard the front door close and went to the window to see if Brooks had gone. But his car was still outside, and across the street a stout light-stepping gentleman had just stopped to light a cigarette.

Sometime, at some place, he had seen that same picture before. He pondered over it, gazing down thoughtfully into the street. The swift early twilight was already falling, and as he looked, the city's nightly miracle was accomplished, and the lights came on.

But for him there was no miracle. He was thinking and watching.

The man had gone on. Warrington reached behind him and turned off his light-switch, and then took up his vigil once more. He was rewarded within five minutes by seeing the individual again. This time, however, he did not pass on. He presumed on the growing darkness and a dark space before the McCook house to take up a position there.

Chapter Sixteen

MARGARET had not been in the Bayne house since her marriage.

"It's like this," James had said. "If I'm not good enough for them, my wife isn't either. Let them come to you; I don't object, so long as I'm not here. But you don't need them any more. The shoe's on the other foot, my girl. Let them have their pride; I've got mine too."

She had acquiesced. She loved Holly, but Annie Bayne had never more than tolerated her, and the house itself held only bitter memories.

And now, when in answer to the furious ringing of the bell Holly opened the door, Margaret was there. A strange Margaret, a wild-eyed, disheveled Margaret, her nose red with weeping, her gloves a crumpled ball in her hand. Since when had Margaret forgotten that no lady appears on the street ungloved?

Holly stood staring at her, and Margaret brushed past and into the hall with a sort of savage violence.

"Where's your mother?"

"She's asleep. She's not well."

"I don't believe it," said Margaret sharply. "She's hiding. Anyhow, I'm going up."

"No, you're not," said Holly. "You're not going up like that. I'm not going to have her startled."

Suddenly Margaret collapsed. She dropped on one of the hall chairs and burst into quiet but unrestrained weeping. She sat there, her face turned up and screwed into the hideous contortions of grief. She did not even feel for her handkerchief; there was something shameless in her abandon, like the bared shoulders and backs Holly used to see on the staircase. It should have been discreetly covered.

Holly, sadly puzzled, watched her and then put an arm around her.

"Tell me," she said. "Come into the drawing-room and tell me."

Margaret got up, but she did not wipe her eyes. Tears fell to her worn black furs and hung there like beads; her bag had fallen open as it hung from her arm, and out of it protruded a damp handkerchief with a gay pink border. Holly drew it out and thrust it into her hand, but she did not use it.

"Now," she said, after closing the door into the hall. "What has happened? Is it Mr. Cox?"

The name brought Margaret to herself like an electric shock. She stopped crying and stared with red-rimmed hostile eyes at Holly.

"You know perfectly well what it is. You must know."

"But I don't. He isn't hurt, or sick, is he?"

"Then your mother knows! It was like her, just when we were so happy, and no thanks to her for that, either. When did she ever think of anybody but herself? And to help that man, after the way he's ruined her life!"

"What man?"

"Your father. Get away from that door, Holly. I don't care whether she's asleep or not. I'm not, and I'm going up."

"I'll let you up, of course, but tell me first. You haven't told me a thing."

Margaret gazed at her bitterly.

"Oh, I'll tell you, all right," she said.

"My James—my honest James, who never had a wrong thought in his life—has been arrested for receiving stolen goods."

HOLLY felt a vague sense of relief. Somehow nothing but murder or sudden death had seemed to justify Margaret's woe. She drew a long breath.

"But of course it's a mistake," she said gently. "He's been at the store too long for them to believe he'd do anything wrong now."

Suddenly Margaret laughed, a hysterical high-pitched laugh that ended in a wail.

"At the store!" she said. "At his own home. In that suitcase your mother sent down."

"Oh, no," said Holly. "Oh, no!"

"Oh, yes," sneered Margaret. "She was using me, as she's always used me. I dare say your father was to call and get it, and then abscond for Europe or some place. She'd do anything to get rid of him, even to—killing my husband. And it will kill him. If you could see him, sitting in the District Attorney's office, with his poor head bowed, and not even knowing what it's all about! And when I told them, they didn't believe me!"

She gave a vicious jerk at her hat and moved toward the door.

"Sick or well," she said, "she's going to get out of bed and go down there. Let them jail her."

"Let them jail me," said Holly quietly.

"You see, I sent the suitcase, Aunt Margaret. She doesn't know anything about it."

Margaret stopped, her hand on the knob.

"You?"

Next to James, she loved Holly. Together they had run the house and counted the pennies. It was to her, not to her mother, that the girl had gone with the small worries, the little snubs, the constant struggle between gentility and poverty which had made up their lives. She came back into the room.

"Why did you do it?"

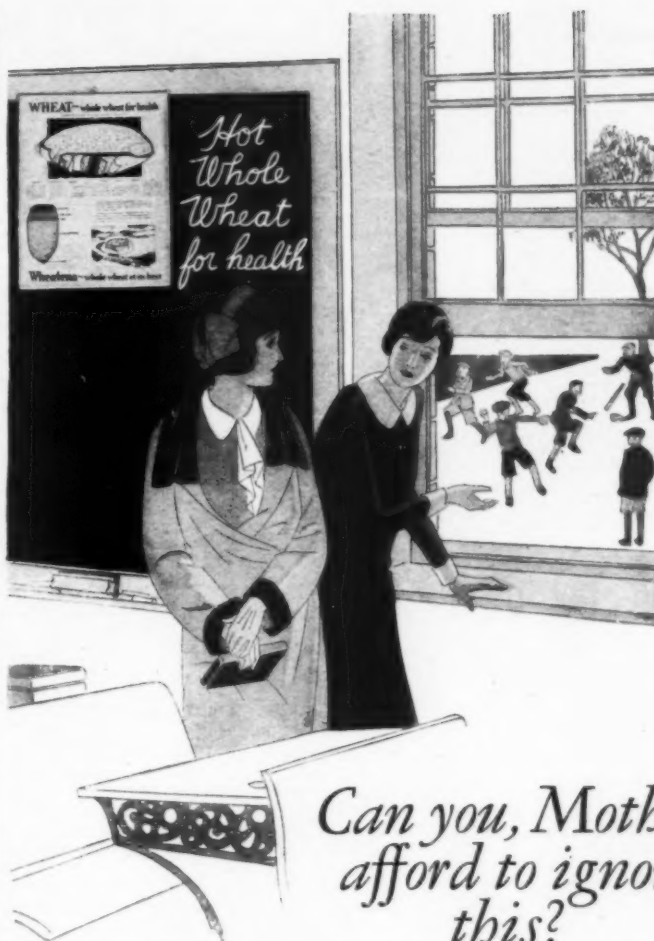
"Because she had found it. She'd already sold one bond; I was afraid she would sell some more."

The full import of the thing dawned on Margaret slowly.

"She sold a bond," she repeated slowly.

"Then—to clear James we would have to implicate her. Oh, my God, Holly! What are we going to do?"

What Margaret and Holly and Warrington found to do in their dire dilemma brings about a situation of even deeper interest. Don't fail to read the next installment of Mrs. Rinehart's captivating story—in our forthcoming June issue.



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THE PROFESSIONAL FRIEND

(Continued from page 39)

everything. But who had been the actual thief? That might be unimportant after all these years. And yet it might be very important. If he could identify the thief who had actually been in the house the night after Fosdick's death, and make him talk, Clifford could at least definitely learn who was the man behind the scheme, and he might learn a great deal more—perhaps something entirely beyond his present vision.

His obvious first move was a talk with Bradley himself. For all the man's cleverness, he might be led into some betraying act or word. And that afternoon Clifford made his way into the Times Square region, thinking with rankling chagrin of his last conflict with his old antagonist. He felt grim satisfaction that Bradley was behind this Fosdick affair. It gave him another chance at the man.

Clifford was detained but a moment in the waiting-room of the Bradley Detective Agency, then was told to enter. Bradley's private office looked anything but the office of a detective who once had been a crude patrolman. In its quiet luxury it might have been the office of some rich banker.

Bradley arose from his flat-topped desk and came forward, a smile of seeming heartiness on his face. "Well, well, Clifford, my boy! It's fine of you to drop around, and it's great to see you again!"

"Thanks, Bradley."

Bradley had offered his hand, and Clifford had taken it. It was one of the strangest phases of the strange relations between these two men that, in the lulls of their war, their manners toward each other had something of the friendship of their earlier years. But beneath that manner irony always lurked, and despite smiles both were ever alertly on guard.

"Sit down by my fireside. Nothing like an open fire to keep a man's mind alive and his soul singing, these drear November days." Nothing could more clearly mark the long road Bradley had traveled than his having a wood fire, and truly appreciating its beauty, on the thirtieth floor of a steam-heated Times Square office building. "Now hop to it, Bob, and tell me all about yourself," he went on, when both were in chairs before the fire.

"I'd much rather talk about you, Bradley," said Clifford, his gaze fixed upon the other. "I think I know what went through your mind and what brought you back from France. You got to thinking of the big money you were losing every month you were away, and that thought was too much for you. Better come back, give bail, and get to work. The way Federal courts are jammed, your case might not come up for three or four years. In that time you could earn any possible fine a dozen times over."

"There you go at your old game," Bradley drawled good-humoredly, "trying to take my mind apart! But I'll admit, old fellow, that your mind has just now worked as though it were my mind's twin brother. But haven't you omitted one little possibility? Why should there ever be any trial, or any fine? That is, for a man who has the right sort of friends in office and who has had assurances from those friends?"

"So then the case is really settled—unofficially?"

"Forgive me for not answering that; if I made a definite claim, and it became public, my friends might be in trouble. By the way, I've never thanked you for that holiday in France. Except for you I wouldn't have gone. I had a grand time, and brushed up a lot on my conversational French. And I'm feeling great. Just look me over and tell me if you don't think that I'm looking particularly fit."

CLIFFORD had already been looking him over. A man of forty-five could hardly look more fit. His darkly handsome face still had the summer's tan that spoke of yachting and golfing; his brilliant black eyes were clear; not a line of gray showed in his glossy hair; that relaxed figure in London tweeds, as Clifford knew from conflict with it, was alive with steely power. First-nighter, excellent dancer, a student who was self-educated. Something of the old admiration thrilled Clifford as memory reminded him that this polished man of the world had been born in a dingy one-room flat over in Hell's Kitchen, and barely twenty years before had been a patrolman pounding New York City's pavements. The brains of the man, the tireless drive in him, his instinctive reaching for culture, were all amazing.

"Yes, Bradley, you certainly do look fit," agreed Clifford. And then he shook off and defied his momentary admiration. "Perhaps," he added coolly, "that's one chief reason you are so amazingly suited for your rôle of the world's greatest rogue. That's what I've just been telling some one you are."

"The greatest rogue? Really, the greatest?" Bradley's tone was bantering, mocking, ironic, but there was also real interest in it. "I'm charmed to be ranked as the world's greatest at anything, and I thank you for the compliment. But why the rogue? Please tell me. You never used to hold back information from me—unless it suited you."

"You're the world's greatest rogue because, when chief of detectives, you had to handle the cleverest crooks who worked in New York, and they were the cleverest of the world. You learned all their subtle methods. And as chief of detectives you learned all there is to be learned about the methods and traps of the New York Police Department in getting evidence against criminals; and so you know how to avoid any snares set by the police. You are a rare expert in these two supposedly conflicting fields of knowledge, and that double expertness is alone enough to make you supreme. But in addition you have a very quick and original brain of your own."

"Most interesting, Bob! If true, most interesting! You make me feel a bit as I did the time I was psycho-analyzed. Please tell me more of myself, Doctor. If there is any more."

"You are also the world's greatest rogue for the reason that you are a specialist in the richest field in the world. In no other city is so much money recklessly spent as in New York. It is where all the rich of the country come to have their fling; and since the country's tone of respectability must be maintained, these follies must therefore be kept secret."

"The follies of the world—what a gold mine to the person who has the secret of these follies! Folly's gold! But other things than follies will do; the innocent mistakes of ignorance, the grip of unfortunate circumstances, will serve just as well, provided they are of the sort that should be kept secret. And never before, Bradley—never!—was there a man whose business had given him such a knowledge of this city's secrets as you possess! Just apply the intimated threat of exposure, and the money pours forth! All the roguery in the world

THE LACEY SISTERS

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WALTER DE LEON

never discovered a richer gold mine, for as long as folly and mistakes and misfortunes continue, that mine will continue its yield of gold!"

At the last Clifford's eyes were flashing, and his words had the drive of direct accusation. But Bradley continued smilingly bland.

"So that's who I really am! I'll expect a whopping bill for learning all that, Doctor. Granting that I am what you say, and do what you say, which I do not grant, is there not a kindlier view to take of my alleged practices? Boiled down, and stated a bit more favorably, what you have said amounts to this: I have certain trade or business secrets which I use to my advantage and turn into profit. My dear fellow, you should arraign all modern business and not poor me; to get some advantage over the other fellow and then turn it to your own profit, that's the very basis of modern business ethics."

Clifford did not respond to this sophistry. He hardly heard it. He was still thinking of the number of secrets, of reputations, of lives, which Bradley held in his possession. And even then he was having a premonition that this case of Mrs. Fosdick was but the first of such contests he was to fight out, wit against wit, with Bradley.

"I am here, Bradley," Clifford said abruptly, "upon one specific case of your roguery." And he handed over the letter Mrs. Fosdick had given him.

BRADLEY took it and glanced at it. "I've been waiting for you to show that. I knew you'd seen Mrs. Fosdick. Go ahead; it's your first move."

"You know what I think of such business as this!"

"You may tell me if you insist. But as you have already told me at very considerable length, I suggest you keep to the business immediately in hand."

"I believe you believe you are holding a volume of importance, or a hundred thousand dollars would not be asked for it. But your letter gives no clue to the nature of the book, and Mrs. Fosdick is not certain what it is."

"Mrs. Fosdick knows exactly what that manuscript volume contains. If she tells you otherwise, she's kidding you. But if she's held out on you, I'll tell you just what she's facing. That book, in the hands of the police, would mean her instant arrest for the murder of her husband. Motive, he had gained possession of information which proved she was unfaithful, and she got him out of the way to escape the consequences. His body will be exhumed, and if there's a trace of drugs in it, she won't have a chance. I'll say that that book certainly is important! No woman ever had out against her more damaging documentary evidence. And what a newspaper story that trial would make! The hidden truth of the famous Fosdick romance, so beloved by the dear public!"

"Mrs. Fosdick denies the existence of any such book as you mention." Clifford had invented this position for tactical reasons; he wished, if possible, to force a showing of the diary, which might also show the place where it was kept.

"Naturally she would deny the book's existence," mocked Bradley. "That would be one of her first claims. What next?"

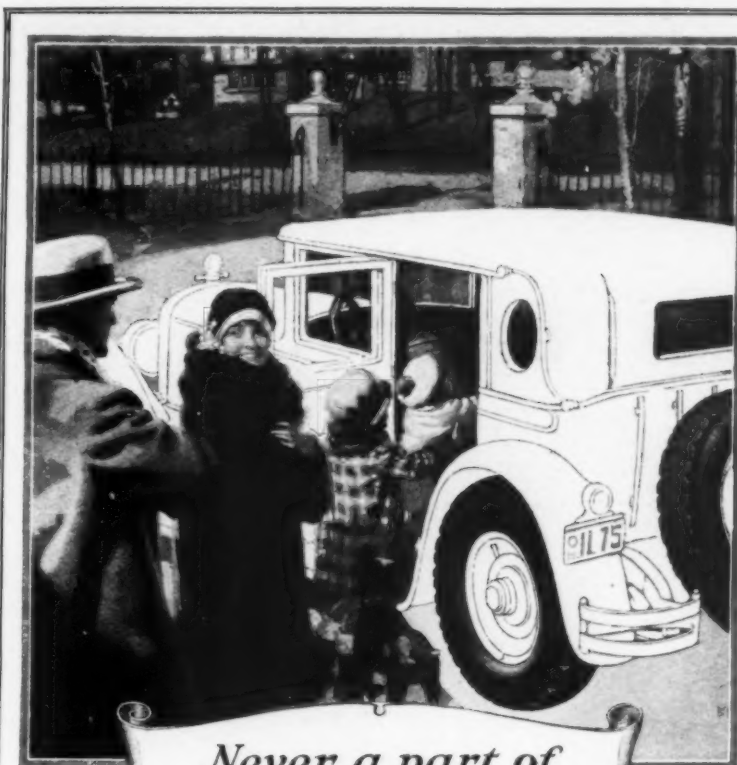
"Or if any such alleged book does exist, she claims that it is a libelous fraud, forged for purposes of extortion."

"Naturally she'd claim that also. Next?"

"I must protect my client's interests. In view of her two assertions I have advised her that before considering your offer to sell—"

"My client's offer," Bradley corrected.

"Your offer!" Clifford drove at him sharply. "Your 'client' is yourself, and if there is such a book, you have that book! Let's drop all pretense!"



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The ONLY way yet discovered that removes all dirt, grime and grease-laden accumulations in gentle safety to your skin

MODERN beauty science has discovered a new way to remove cleansing cream—a way different from any you have ever known.

It banishes the soiled towel method that all women detest. It contrasts the harshness of fibre and paper substitutes with a softness you'll love.

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It will prove that no matter how long you have removed cleansing cream with towels, paper substitutes, etc., you have never yet removed it thoroughly from your skin... have never removed it properly, or in gentle safety to your skin.

What it is

The name is KLEENEX... a totally new kind of material, developed in consultation with leading authorities on skin care, solely for the removal of cleansing cream.

It is the first absorbent made for this purpose. There is no other like it.

Exquisitely dainty, immaculate and inviting; you use it, then discard it. White as snow and soft as down, it is 27 times as absorbent as an ordinary towel; 24 times as any fibre or paper makeshift!

Stops oily skins. Combats imperfections. Lightens the skin

On the advice of skin specialists, women today are flocking to this new way.

It will effect unique results on your skin. By removing ALL dirt and grime, it will give your skin a tone three or more shades whiter than before.

That's because old methods failed in absorbency. They removed but part of the cream and grime. The rest they rubbed back



in. That is why your skin may seem several shades darker sometimes than it really is.

It will combat skin and nose oiliness amazingly. For an oily skin indicates cold cream left in the skin. The pores exude it constantly. That's why you must powder now so frequently. That's why, too, imperfections often appear.

This new way combats those failures of old ways. One day's use will prove its case beyond doubt.

Send the coupon

Upon receipt of it a full 7-day supply will be sent without charge.

Or... obtain a packet at any drug or department store. Put up as exquisitely as fine handkerchiefs, in two sizes: the Professional, 9x10-inch sheets—and the Boudoir, size 6x7 inches. Boxes that fit into flat drawers of vanity tables... a month's supply in each. Costs only a few cents.



Kleenex comes in dainty flat handkerchief boxes, to fit your dressing table drawer... in two sizes:

Boudoir size, sheets 6 by 7 inches . 35c
Professional, sheets 9 by 10 inches . 65c

7-Day Supply—FREE

KLEENEX CO., R-5
167 Quincy St., Chicago, Ill.

Please send without expense to me a sample packet of KLEENEX as offered.

Name.....

Address.....

Bradley did not raise his voice, but it now had a cutting edge of sharpest steel. "Clifford, I have accepted you as the representative of your client. Either you accept me as the representative of my client, or our dealings stop at this point. Choose, and choose quick!"

Their eyes clashed. Clifford believed that this "client" was merely Bradley's alibi prepared in advance in case his plans should come afoul of the law, but he realized that the other would not readily abandon this protective measure.

"All right, Bradley—your client, then. To resume: In view of my client's statements regarding the nonexistence of the book or its fraudulent nature, I have advised her, before considering your client's offer, to obtain a look at this book in order to learn the exact nature of what she is being asked to buy. This seems a most reasonable request. To see that book, or to arrange for its being seen later, is the immediate purpose of this visit."

"To see that book will cost your client an even hundred thousand. That paid, and it must be paid in cash before the book is turned over, your client can then look at the book for as long as she likes."

"But man alive—suppose she paid over all that money, and then discovered that the book is the forgery she believes it! Where will she then be?"

"If she doesn't want the book after she's seen it, let her say so, hand it back, and I'll hand back the money. My client will be just as well pleased to have the matter turn out in this manner."

That reply practically ended Clifford's hope of locating the book through any questioning of Bradley.

"Then as to your client's time-allowance—ten days. That's a very short period in which to settle so large an affair. Can't we have an extension of time?"

"Ten days is my client's limit."

"And if we are not able to settle by the end of ten days?"

"You remember the alternative stated in the letter. My client feels under obligation to some old friends in the Police Department. He seems to think that in this book there are some remarkable clues to what may be New York's most sensational mystery-love-murder affair, and he'd like to have his friends have the very sensational credit of clearing that mystery up. In fact, that satisfaction is worth fully a hundred thousand to him. So if the matter is not settled by your client at the date specified, the book will be turned in by the orders of my client as evidence to the police."

A SHIVER went through Clifford. He knew Bradley, and he knew that these words were no empty threat. The motives behind this position were obvious. The present chief of police was Bradley's friend; handing him such evidence in a sensational case was a great favor that would not be forgotten when Bradley stood in need of favors.

Clifford recalled a detail. "As I came in, Bradley, I noticed Officer Glynn sitting in your outer office. I suppose he's waiting there for the book in case you are to turn it over to the police?"

"Exactly. Glynn is the Chief's man detailed for this job. And he has orders to wait around for the next ten days. If that book is to go to the police, there will not be one instant lost in getting it there. I'm taking no risks. And here's a pointer for you, Clifford, in case you feel prompted in the interests of your client to try any of your well-known fancy-work. At the very first suspicious move on your part, or the hint or rumor of such a move, that diary goes straight to Glynn."

"Just what do you mean by a suspicious move?"

"Any move that would suggest that you

KLEENEX
Sanitary Cold Cream Remover

were trying to get hold of the book by some means other than by direct negotiations with me."

"Is all this a threat?"

"Give it the name that suits you. I'm just telling you exactly what will happen. And it's something you should remember."

For a moment their eyes grimly held each other. There was battle in both faces.

"I'll remember," Clifford said briefly.

"A wise decision. And now what next?"

"That's all for today."

The menace in Bradley's face changed instantly to a smile. "Then away dull care!" he cried. As if by magic his manner transformed the atmosphere of this office into the atmosphere of that old office of his down at Headquarters, when he had been chief of detectives and Clifford had been his most promising and best-liked subordinate.

"Have a smoke, Bob."

"Thanks. Don't mind if I do."

And with the same easy familiar gesture with which he had taken Bradley's cigars back in those old days, Clifford helped himself.

CLIFFORD left Bradley's office with a baffled, chafing sense of impotence. The case, difficult enough at the outset, had just become infinitely more difficult. Bradley's threat, and the figure of Officer Glynn on fixed post at the door, had worked that transformation for the worse.

But Clifford went ahead, all the more determined. There was little enough he could do, but that little he would do most thoroughly. He wanted Bradley watched every minute, and since he dared not act himself or use men known to be his, he employed another agency for this surveillance. He was hoping by this method of constant watching to gain some clue to the flaw in Bradley's plan, the flaw that there is in every plan.

Clifford's mind was ever reverting to the thief. He could not have told why, but that hired tool had settled into his subconsciousness as the possible key to all his difficulties.

After Clifford's first visit from Mrs. Fosdick, he had tried to get in touch with Stephen Fosdick. Not that he attached any importance to the younger brother of the dead man, but just in the way of efficient routine he wished to question all persons remotely connected with the case. At Fosdick's apartment he had been told that the man had not been home for three days and that his whereabouts were not known. The next day Clifford telephoned, and received the same reply; this reply came again on the third day. Clifford was determined not to be balked, and so he caused inquiries to be made at Fosdick's clubs and at resorts he favored, and as a means to locating the man, he asked for reports upon his habits.

No recent trace of Fosdick was found, but reports upon his habits were numerous and unanimous. Fosdick was a Broadway habitué, a waster and a weakling; from the reports, Clifford judged him to be as bad in inclination as his brother, but lacking his elder's face and the ingenuity by which he had concealed his evil.

Clifford was now aroused; he was going to find the man. If Fosdick was in New York, he was probably holed up along Broadway with some of his own kind, perhaps on a prolonged spree. Clifford asked Mrs. Fosdick for his picture; she had none, but sent one of her husband, saying that the brothers looked much alike. Then Clifford sent for his old friend Detective Sergeant Jimmy Kelley, head of the Broadway flying squad—a force of some dozen Central Office detectives, whose nightly function was to move about through all the hotels, cafés, dance-halls, night-clubs and other pleasure resorts along Broadway and keep such places swept clear of crooks.



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Maybe your teeth are gloriously clear, simply clouded with a film coat. Make this remarkable test and find out.

Here's a Gift

Just send coupon for full 10-day tube of this new way to dazzling, white teeth and firm, healthy gums

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Note the difference in the color of your teeth. Mark, too, how much firmer your gums become.

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Run your tongue across your teeth, and you will feel a film, a viscous coat that covers them.

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the millions breed in it and lay your teeth open to decay. And they, with tartar, are a chief cause of pyorrhea and gum disorders.

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Explorations in Friendship

MANY of us misunderstand our fellow-men. We are like sealed letters, side by side in a postman's pouch. Neither sees into the heart of the other.

Looking into mirrors brings us no friendships. We should look out of our windows, step outside our doors, go far beyond the town, to see who's who and what's what in this amazing world. Life is not all indoors, nor can it be seen from a car window. It has a heartbeat of its own—bigger, more profound, more significant than our individual vibrations.

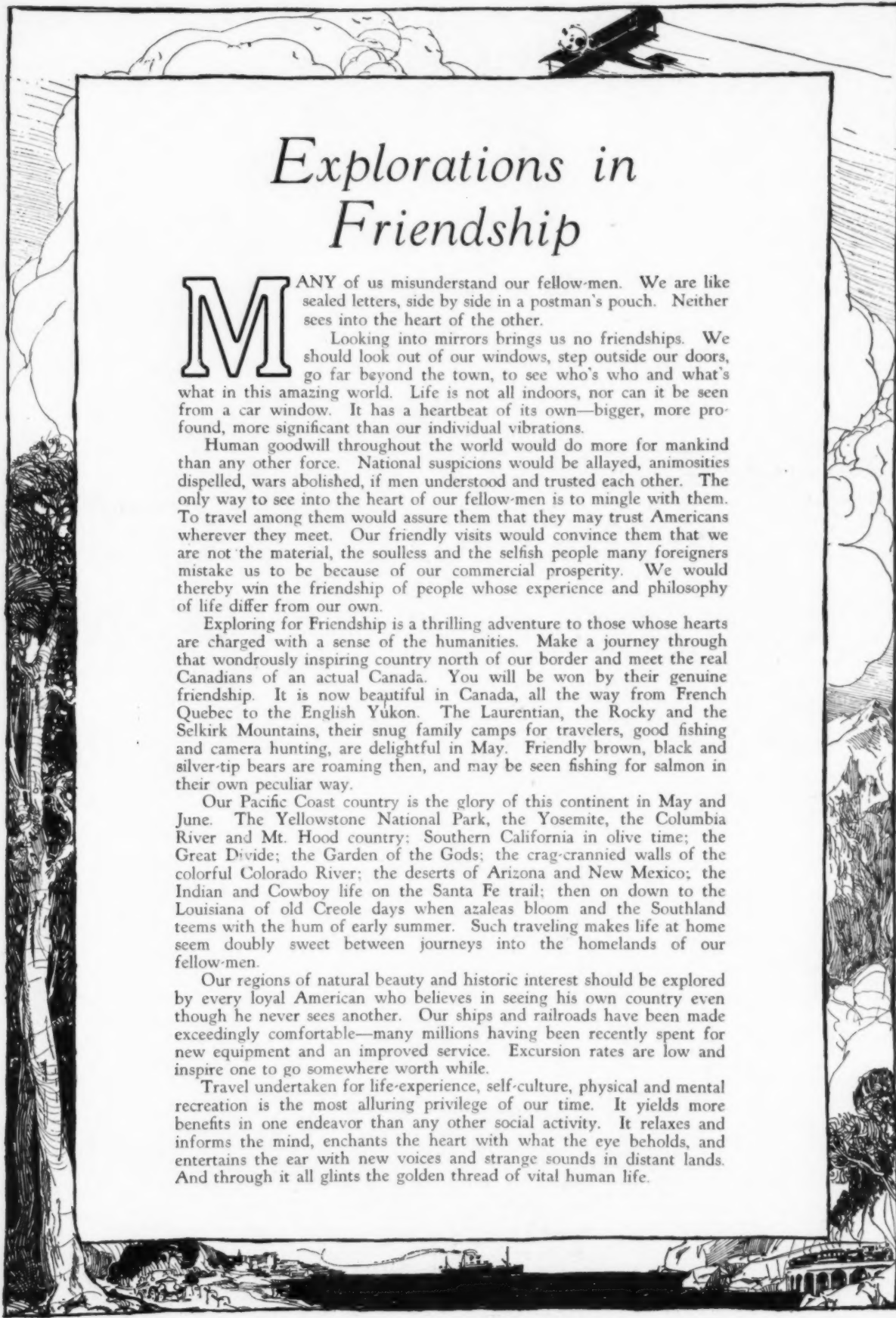
Human goodwill throughout the world would do more for mankind than any other force. National suspicions would be allayed, animosities dispelled, wars abolished, if men understood and trusted each other. The only way to see into the heart of our fellow-men is to mingle with them. To travel among them would assure them that they may trust Americans wherever they meet. Our friendly visits would convince them that we are not the material, the soulless and the selfish people many foreigners mistake us to be because of our commercial prosperity. We would thereby win the friendship of people whose experience and philosophy of life differ from our own.

Exploring for Friendship is a thrilling adventure to those whose hearts are charged with a sense of the humanities. Make a journey through that wondrously inspiring country north of our border and meet the real Canadians of an actual Canada. You will be won by their genuine friendship. It is now beautiful in Canada, all the way from French Quebec to the English Yukon. The Laurentian, the Rocky and the Selkirk Mountains, their snug family camps for travelers, good fishing and camera hunting, are delightful in May. Friendly brown, black and silver-tip bears are roaming then, and may be seen fishing for salmon in their own peculiar way.

Our Pacific Coast country is the glory of this continent in May and June. The Yellowstone National Park, the Yosemite, the Columbia River and Mt. Hood country; Southern California in olive time; the Great Divide; the Garden of the Gods; the crag-crannied walls of the colorful Colorado River; the deserts of Arizona and New Mexico; the Indian and Cowboy life on the Santa Fe trail; then on down to the Louisiana of old Creole days when azaleas bloom and the Southland teems with the hum of early summer. Such traveling makes life at home seem doubly sweet between journeys into the homelands of our fellow-men.

Our regions of natural beauty and historic interest should be explored by every loyal American who believes in seeing his own country even though he never sees another. Our ships and railroads have been made exceedingly comfortable—many millions having been recently spent for new equipment and an improved service. Excursion rates are low and inspire one to go somewhere worth while.

Travel undertaken for life-experience, self-culture, physical and mental recreation is the most alluring privilege of our time. It yields more benefits in one endeavor than any other social activity. It relaxes and informs the mind, enchants the heart with what the eye beholds, and entertains the ear with new voices and strange sounds in distant lands. And through it all glints the golden thread of vital human life.



"Sure I know that bird," said Jimmy Kelley on being shown the photograph. "I've seen him a hundred times in Broadway joints. Loves to step around the dance-floors all night with gals, loves to lap up bootleg, and he sits in a lot of big poker sessions. Guess all my boys know him, but better let me have some copies of that photo to hand around. If he shows his face once along Broadway, we'll pick him up and jazz him straight around to you."

"Don't do that, Jimmy. Let him stay just where he is and get me quick word. I'd like to look over the people he's with. They may mean something to me."

DAY by slow day the time-allowance moved by. For Clifford, imprisoned in his office, not daring to take the relief that active work would have afforded, these were days of unprecedented strain. Every few hours he received from the agency he had engaged exhaustive reports upon Bradley's movements; but the reports told him nothing. And at least once a day Jimmy Kelley telephoned in; his message was always the same: no clue to the missing man.

Thus eight of the ten days passed; and it seemed to Clifford that he was facing a dead wall. On the evening of the eighth day he was studying the problem in his apartment when his telephone rang. Jimmy Kelley was on the wire.

"Just spotted your wandering boy, Bob. He's at the Pipes o' Pan with a pair of he-gold-diggers."

"I'll be there in ten minutes. Be on the watch for me, and arrange so I can look on without being seen."

Fifteen minutes later Clifford was in the smaller room at the Pipes o' Pan, designed for couples who wished to sit out a dance, and separated from the ballroom by a row of gilded columns with palms between them. From behind the screen of palms Clifford peered out at the rather thin and quiet crowd of the night-club; in a few minutes the theater crowd would be out and the Pipes o' Pan would be jammed and be at its gayest.

There at the table Jimmy Kelley indicated sat the two "he-gold-diggers." Just the company and the setting, reflected Clifford, in which Fosdick, according to his reputation, might be expected to be found. The pair were of a distinctive Broadway type: slicked hair, over-smart in their dress, wise in the ways of night-clubs, infinite in their leisure. Clifford knew both men. They had been pickpockets before they had discovered that their agile feet and the silly women of the night-clubs made a combination more productive of rich results than their old trade.

This pair were just now laboring under very obvious worry. Following the direction of their anxious eyes, Clifford saw among the dancers the man he had been searching for these many days: there could be no doubt of it—the likeness to the photograph of the handsome Hal Fosdick was too great. But what a poor thing this Steve Fosdick was: weakness and dissipation in every feature of his pasty, night-blooming face. He was half tipsy, and was being supported through the dance by his pretty night-blooming partner.

One of the two slick-haired men halted him in the dance, plainly urging him to leave, and took his arm and tried to lead him away. But Fosdick balked, and his partner spoke angrily to the intruder and drew Fosdick back into the dance. The slick-haired one saw he could press his point no further without starting a row upon the dance-floor; so he rejoined his companion, and the pair again whispered anxiously to each other.

Clifford watched everything closely, his excitement growing. The dumb show he had witnessed might have some deep significance, might lead him on to something.

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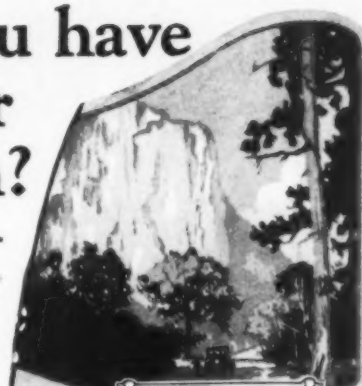
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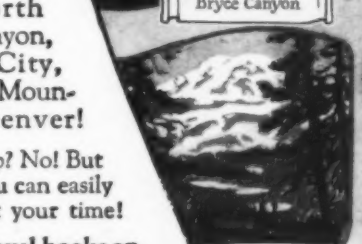
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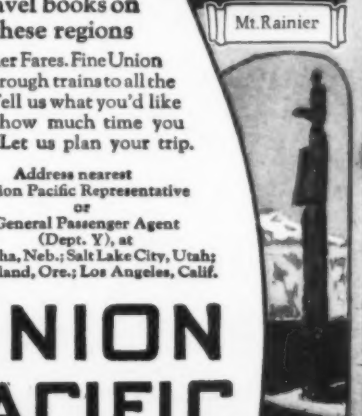
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Several minutes passed. And then Clifford was glad that he had held his hand. Through the main entrance of the Pipes o' Pan appeared Bradley, and marched straight for the table at which sat the two young men with the patent-leather hair.

Bradley's face was grim. The two met him with consternation. He sat down, and what he said to the pair most certainly did not add to their ease.

"If I could only hear their talk!" breathed Clifford. And then tensely to Kelley: "Jimmy, I daren't be seen, but this is your world and it's natural for you to appear here. Just saunter out there and up behind Bradley, get an earful if you can, say hello to Bradley, and then wander back here."

Jimmy did as requested. In five minutes he was back at Clifford's side.

"Bradley was giving those two birds hell for letting that Fosdick out. He had just been around to their dump and found no one at home. The satin-haired lads were trying to excuse themselves by saying Fosdick gave them the slip while they were asleep. They located him here, but he won't come home for them."

"Guards, Jimmy—that's what those two are!" breathed Clifford. "Bradley's guards paid to keep Fosdick out of sight! That means that for some reason Fosdick is mighty important to Bradley!"

"Sounds like the right dope, Bob."

"If Fosdick is important to Bradley, then he's far more important to me. I've got to have that man, Jimmy, and get him without Bradley suspecting me."

WHEN Fosdick next swung by the table at which the three men sat, it was Bradley who stepped out and halted him with a hand upon his arm. This time there was neither protest nor defiance from Fosdick or the girl. Fosdick's weak face showed the fear that is given the master, and at a curt word from Bradley the girl obediently walked away. Bradley led his charge to the table, and after a few words together, the four men walked out.

"Quick, let's be after them," breathed Clifford. "You take the lead, Jimmy—I've got to keep up this being careful."

But no great care at shadowing was required. The theaters had just let out, and the crowds in the street made an effective screen against discovery; moreover the four, instead of riding away, walked two blocks across town and disappeared into an apartment-house.

For half an hour Clifford and Jimmy stood watching from the black cavern of an office building's entrance; evidently Bradley was giving the two guardians very severe orders for the further care of their charge. But presently Bradley stepped forth and moved toward Broadway.

While waiting, Clifford had been considering how he could get possession of Fosdick without suspicion of his interference being roused. "Jimmy," he now said, "I want those two black-haired gentlemen suddenly removed from the picture. Can you arrest them?"

"Surest thing you know," was the prompt reply. "They're old-time dips. Supposed to run 'em in every so often just to check up on 'em like a laundry list. Anyhow, a pearl necklace was pinched last night in the Pipes o' Pan; I can arrest them on suspicion of that job, and it'll hold 'em over night."

"If you hold them an hour, it'll be long enough for me, but for that hour don't let them send any message, and be sure Fosdick stays behind. And when you leave, see the door is left unlocked."

"I've got you, Bob. I'll get one of my men to help me and be right back."

In ten minutes he had returned with another member of the flying squad, and the two were climbing the stairs of the apartment, Clifford behind them. Jimmy paused



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at a door, but Clifford continued halfway up the next flight and took his stand there. Then Jimmy rang the bell.

After a moment the door opened, and Clifford heard Jimmy's brisk voice. "Hello, boys. Put on your hats, you two. You're going to take a little ride down to see the Big Boss."

"But see here, Kelley, we haven't done a thing!" sounded a startled protest.

"You tell that to the Chief. And do all your talking to him. It's no good chinning at me. You boys know that when I say you've got to go, you've just got to go. So find your hats."

There were further protests, a demand that they be allowed to telephone their lawyers, and then a final demand that Fosdick be taken along. All were sharply disallowed, and looking over the bannister, Clifford saw the pair being led away. He waited until the party had descended a flight; then he slipped down and softly passed through the unlocked door.

THE door opened directly into the dining-room of the little apartment. Already Fosdick had poured himself a drink and was greedily taking it down in a single swig. The table, with its cards and poker-chips, the sideboard with its empty bottles and its full ones, told how Fosdick's imprisonment had been spent with these great lures to hold him; guards and a lock had been merely precautions to make certainty more sure.

At the click of the closing door, Fosdick whirled about. Under Clifford's hard gaze the startled man blinked his feverish, bearded eyes in apprehension, and his weak lips twitched inarticulately. Clifford had a better look than in the Pipes o' Pan, and it seemed to Clifford that he had never before seen so much weak self-indulgence as was in that handsome face, now so frightfully marred by dissipation. His twitching was definite sign that whatever little nerve he may have had left had been shattered by these last days and nights of uninterrupted drinking and gambling.

"Who—who are you," quavered the other, "and what do you want?"

Clifford knew that the quickest way to get results from this shattered being was to strike hard and swift, to throw him into an instant panic—one form of the old third degree. The thing was so easy with such an opponent that Clifford felt contempt for himself. But he turned up a lower corner of his vest, revealing the shield pinned thereon, and harshly advanced upon the other.

"Clifford's my name," he drove out at him, "and I'm here to arrest you for your share in helping Bradley blackmail your own sister-in-law through the use of your dead brother's diary."

"If—if he's doing that," gasped Fosdick, "I don't know anything about it! Honest!"

Clifford doubted if Fosdick did have any knowledge of Bradley's present measures; Bradley would not give confidence to such a creature. But Clifford went relentlessly on.

"Oh, yes, you are in that blackmail game with Bradley! If not, why are you here in hiding at Bradley's orders?"

"I—I don't know. Honest, I don't. He just asked me to stay out of sight for two weeks, but he didn't tell me why."

"Don't expect me to believe you consented to stay cooped up here just because Bradley asked you! What was your other motive, your big motive? Come, Fosdick, out with the truth! If you're not guilty, only the truth will get you out of the terrible mess you've got yourself in!"

Fosdick ran a tongue between dry, twitching lips. "He—he said if I would stay absolutely out of sight for two weeks he—he would pay me a thousand dollars. I—I needed the money."

They all say:



2
weeks
is ample
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CANADA STEAMSHIP LINES

"He wanted you out of sight, where you could not be found, because you might be a danger to his game?"

"I tell you I don't know."

Clifford was convinced Fosdick did not, and was also convinced that this was Bradley's motive—or part of it.

"So Bradley is to pay you a thousand. Has Bradley ever paid you money before? And how much?"

Fosdick hesitated, as if the next words were choking him.

"Out with the truth!" Clifford drove on. "Or by God, you'll get the limit!"

"Ye-yes," stammered the frantic man.

"Five—five—five thousand."

"Five thousand! And for what did he pay you that five thousand?"

"For—for my brother's diary."

Clifford almost reeled under the impact of the significance of those gasped, frightened words. So—his conjecture had been all wrong: Bradley had not engineered the theft! It had not been executed, for a price, by some daring and expert cracksmen! Instead of the bold figure that had so far occupied the rôle, the real thief was this poor weakling of a younger brother!

A THRILL of exultation went through Clifford. His routine work, till this last hour so unpromising, had turned up at least one weak spot in Bradley's flawless scheme!

"Go on, Fosdick. Let's hear just how you stole the diary."

"But—but I never intended to steal the diary," protested the other, seeking to clear himself. "And at the time I—I didn't know I had stolen it. I didn't ever know there was a diary."

"Then tell what you did intend. And just what you did do. Remember, the truth!"

"I—I, you see," the miserable man began, "I didn't have much money. Hal was older, and controlled all our money. He would give me mighty little, and I was always hard up. The night before he died he won a lot at gambling. Several thousands. I knew because I was with him. We—we got home about six in the morning. I asked him for some of that money. I tell you I was in a terrible fix. He just laughed at me, and locked the money up in his wall-safe. That night he died. And I—and I—"

"Go on!" ordered Clifford.

"I knew he hadn't banked the money, for he had slept all day. And I knew that I was the only person who knew he had the money, or knew it was in the safe. So—so I decided to steal it. It was really mine anyway, since he was dead. I knew the combination from having watched him open the safe. I watched my chance, and—and it was easy. But I was in such a hurry that I took everything in the compartment. It wasn't until I was locked in my room that I saw I had a little black book. I was going to put it back, but I was afraid. You see, lawyers, making sure about the will, opened the safe and made a list of everything in it. I then knew that if I put it back, the lawyers, finding something that hadn't been there before, would know the safe had been tampered with, and I might get into trouble. And so—and so I never dared put it back. And that—and that, Mr. Clifford, is the God's truth about the diary."

"But not all of God's truth! After you read the diary, the idea came to you that it might be worth something—that there might be money in holding it over the head of your sister-in-law. But you hadn't the nerve to try it yourself, so you went to Bradley. When did you start in with him? Come on—out with the rest of it!"

"About—about a year ago. I needed money. So I told him about the book. He told me there was nothing doing just then, but that he'd keep me in mind. About two weeks ago he sent for me and bought the

book. The price was six thousand dollars—five thousand down, which I was paid, and the other thousand to be paid after I'd kept out of sight for two weeks. And that, Mr. Clifford, is absolutely all of God's truth that I know!"

Clifford regarded the man silently, his thoughts considering next steps. Then he spoke authoritatively:

"Fosdick, you've already run away from this place once tonight. I'm phoning for a taxi, and as soon as it gets here, you run away the second time. At least that's the impression you're going to leave behind. And the second time you're running away for good."

FIVE minutes later Clifford had his captive down in his taxicab and ordered him to turn his face into the corner and pretend a drunken stupor and keep on pretending. The one-way street led back to Broadway, and in front of the Pipes o' Pan the taxi was halted by a signal which gave north-and-south traffic the right of way. And—while the cab was locked in place by the cars about, Bradley came sauntering from the entrance to the night club! He sighted Clifford, and with a smile walked toward him.

Sudden panic struck at Clifford. It might be like Bradley, in his diabolical camaraderie, to step coolly into the cab and say he'd just ride along. Or at the sound of Bradley's voice Fosdick might turn his face. Either act would mean an instant end of things.

"Hello, Bob," said Bradley, pausing at the open window. "Why home so early? There are a couple of nice ladies I know up in the club. Get out and let's dance for a while."

"Can't. I've a friend here I've got to see home."

"Can't you park him some place?"

"Don't dare. He's one of these mean-tempered amateur booze pugilists. The moonshine knocked him cold in the tenth round. But when he comes out of this he'll want to start the fight all over again. I've got to get him home while he's pacified."

"Sorry. Well, don't forget you're supposed to have a little engagement with me day after tomorrow."

With an easy salute he was gone, and Clifford breathed easily again. Rarely had any of his plans had a more narrow escape from ruin.

Thirty minutes later Clifford was in deep thought sitting in his own apartment, and Fosdick was in a bedroom in care of one of Clifford's most trusted men. He had made some progress; he had discovered the real thief. But the thief was the merest pawn—so very weak a pawn that Bradley's move had been to eliminate him and see that he remained out of the game. For the rest, Bradley ruled the board: he still held the diary, the prints, the films. He still had the power to unloose upon the city one of the most scandalously sensational stories New York City had ever known.

THE next day was the ninth day of grace. At ten o'clock Clifford was with Mrs. Fosdick, and when he left her half an hour later, he had won his two points: her consent to his seeing her fiancé McKane and hinting at the danger, and her promise to telephone a message to McKane expressing her implicit faith in Clifford.

At eleven o'clock Clifford entered McKane's office. His first vague impression that the diary could be located only by placing a hundred thousand dollars in Bradley's hands was now a certainty. In the plan that had evolved during the previous night the hundred thousand had become a necessity, and to try to secure the hundred thousand was his present mission with Ross McKane.

He liked the young engineer from the first glance; he was clean-cut, open, a man of energy, of ideas, of ideals. Clifford felt a



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sudden warm gladness in behalf of Mrs. Fosdick, for here was a man to whom any woman could feel safe in tying her happiness.

"Mr. McKane," began Clifford when greetings were over, "your fiancée has told you about my professional connection with her. I know Mrs. Fosdick's exact situation, and I can assure you that she is in the very greatest danger. I am trying to save her. I must necessarily be vague. I cannot tell you the danger. I can only give you the consequence of the danger, if it is not averted. She will be publicly shamed and ruined, and your marriage will never take place."

"I've known for almost two weeks that something terrible is wrong," McKane's unsteady voice revealed the strain under which he had been living. "I've begged Mrs. Fosdick to tell me what it is, but she seems to be afraid. Mr. Clifford, I might be able to help her out if you would only tell me what the trouble is!"

"The story is not mine to tell. I can go no farther than I have already gone. If you ever learn the truth of her danger, it will be from Mrs. Fosdick. I suggest that you let her tell you in her own time. Perhaps in the quiet years after marriage—for I'm hoping that this is all going to turn out happily. In the meantime, just trust her. She is a helpless victim of circumstances who is innocent in every way."

"I do trust her! It's—it's hell, just sitting in passive belief! Can't I do something to help save her?"

"You can do just one thing. Will you put up one hundred thousand dollars to see her through this trouble?"

"A million!" He reached for his check-book. "You may have it this moment!"

"I don't want it now. And it can't be a check; it must be in cash. And I don't want to touch it myself. If I can make the arrangements I desire, you will handle the money yourself. I'll telephone you later."

After the exchange of a few further remarks Clifford left the financial district and headed uptown. At twelve o'clock he entered Bradley's office, noting that Officer Glynn still sat waiting without. If Bradley was perturbed by the second disappearance of the impounded Fosdick, he gave no sign of it.

Clifford came to the point at once. "Tomorrow is the last day you've given my client. We'll be ready with the money tomorrow. But I wish to agree upon a few details in advance."

"What are they?"

"I want Mrs. Fosdick to be present at the transfer to receive and identify the book."

"That's agreed to. What next?"

"Mr. McKane is putting up the money. Very naturally he insists on being present to see that his money is actually paid over, and that he is not being held up by me. In fact, he wants to handle his own money himself."

"Don't blame him. Let him come to the party, since he's paying for it."

After the conference had been set for eleven o'clock in Bradley's office, Clifford again made his way up to Mrs. Fosdick's residence. He told Mrs. Fosdick what he had done that morning, but he did not dare trust her with his plans for the next forenoon. He instructed her carefully in one or two little things she was to do the following day, then returned to his apartment. The rest of that day and much of the night he devoted to aspects of the problem of how to win a game with a single pawn.

A FAVORITE method with Clifford, but one not used so frequently as to render his sincerity open to suspicion, was to manipulate circumstances so adroitly that his manipulation was never suspected, and to let those circumstances sweep onward seemingly of their own accord toward an apparently

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MISCELLANEOUS—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

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Sometimes this method had brought startling success. And sometimes it had collapsed and ended in dismal failure.

All that Clifford had done since taking on the Fosdick case had been a careful preparation to try this method once again: to devise his unsuspected climax, to set his stage, to bring on his characters plausibly. And on Friday morning, at the appointed hour of eleven, as he escorted his little company of actors to Bradley's office, it seemed to Clifford that never before had he staked such great issues upon so precarious a procedure. Any actor, at any time, might fail to act as Clifford's mental drama required, and one such little failure meant complete failure. And by his unwritten, unrehearsed drama he had to get not only the diary; far more important, he had to get out of Bradley's possession the films of the diary's pages and the prints undoubtedly made from them.

As he passed through Bradley's anteroom, the stolid waiting figure of Officer Glynn was a further reminder of how delicate and precarious was this structure upon which he was venturing everything.

Bradley received them with the formal courtesy of a distinguished attorney acting on the other side of a case that is to be settled by out-of-court agreement. Bradley must have sensed that no group more strained had ever entered his office: young Mrs. Fosdick, sick and pallid with suspense—her happiness, her name and her very life in danger, herself in ignorance of what was about to happen, her fate to be determined in the next few minutes; and Ross McKane, also sick and pale, knowing nothing except that he was supplying a hundred thousand dollars, and that his betrothed stood in some unknown danger deadly alike to herself and their dream of happiness.

"I PRESUME you have come prepared to meet the terms specified by my client?" began Bradley when all were seated. He himself had taken a dominating station in front of his glowing wood fire.

"Yes," answered Clifford. "But a little request first. Some papers were not quite ready when I left my office, and as I expect to go home with Mrs. Fosdick when through with you, I ordered the papers to follow me here. Mind asking your outside office to tell anybody to wait who comes for me?"

Bradley gave Clifford a searching look. But there was no sign of guile in Clifford's face; the request was a very ordinary one. So Bradley took up his desk phone and gave the desired order to his outer office.

"Then since you are prepared," Bradley resumed, "we may as well proceed immediately with our business. That business is very simple and brief, and has been agreed upon in previous conferences: the payment by you of one hundred thousand dollars in cash, and on its receipt the delivery to you of the book which is now the property of my client."

"That is understood and agreed to," said Clifford. "But before going ahead, I wish to recall to our minds one or two other items of our agreement."

"And those other items, Clifford?" There was a quick suspicion in Bradley's eyes.

"What I said about protecting my client's interests when I first came to you. I then

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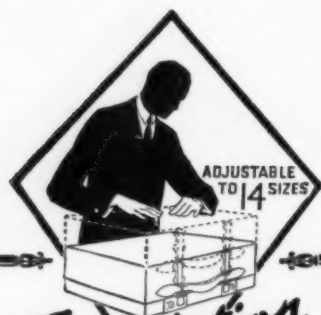
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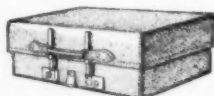
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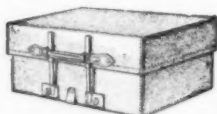
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said our claim was that the book was either nonexistent or a forgery. You agreed that if Mrs. Fosdick, after paying the specified sum, was not satisfied with the book, she could return the book and receive back her money. A forgery is a possibility, and I must protect Mrs. Fosdick against that eventuality."

"Oh, that little notion! Yes, I agree to that, and I'll repeat it: if Mrs. Fosdick is not satisfied with her bargain, I'm perfectly willing to trade back." He gave Clifford a dry, sardonic smile, in it something of contempt. "The very fact, Mr. Clifford, that your client is here and has with her the money is a rather effective answer to any contention of forgery."

"Then with that point thoroughly understood we are ready to proceed," returned Clifford.

"First the money; next you get the book, and then all will be over."

Clifford turned and held out a hand to young McKane. The latter took a packet of bills from an inner pocket and gave them to Clifford, who handed them on to Bradley.

"One hundred one-thousand-dollar bills, Bradley, brand new from the bank. I was in the bank this morning when the money was drawn."

"Perhaps, Clifford. But you won't mind if I also protect the interests of my client against the same eventuality of forgery." Again he flashed at Clifford his sardonic smile; then he proceeded to spread the money out on his desk and to run the fresh notes through expert fingers and beneath expert eyes. "No forgery here. You're exonerated, Clifford, from any charge of trying to pass counterfeit money on me." Next he counted the bills. "And the money is not only good money, but is the correct amount." He put the bills in his own inner pocket and stood up. "And now for the little book."

BEHIND his desk was a heavy safe. He twirled its dials, swung it open, and when he turned, he held a thin notebook in a binding of black leather. This he gave to Clifford.

"There is Mrs. Fosdick's book. Our business is now entirely completed."

"Except for its examination and acceptance by Mrs. Fosdick, as agreed." Clifford passed the book on to her. "Mrs. Fosdick, do you recognize that as what it purports to be—a diary written by your late husband?"

And then Mrs. Fosdick went through the one tiny bit of action with which Clifford had dared entrust her. She slowly scanned the pages of the little book, then gave it back to Clifford.

"That is not my husband's writing," she said.

"What's that?" Bradley demanded sharply. Clifford tossed the book upon the desk. When he spoke, his voice was suddenly hard and accusing.

"You heard her, Bradley! It's exactly what we suspected from the beginning: the diary is a forgery! You've tried to bunk us with a forgery!"

Bradley was on his feet, tense, glowering, dark with menace.

"You mean you're not accepting the book?"

"We accept it as a piece of forgery. But as nothing else."

"Then, by God, I know who will accept it, Clifford!" he snapped out, in devastating fury and with an almost gloating triumph. "I told you I'd just about as soon turn this over to the police, and I warned you that at your first suspicious move that book would go straight to the police. Damn you, Clifford, I'm glad you've made your slip! Officer Glynn is still waiting outside, and in another second he'll be in here and have that book in his hands!"

Bradley seized his phone to summon Glynn.



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"And you, Bradley, in turning over that book to the police, you'll be making the worst slip of your life!" Clifford snapped back at him. "You'll be guilty of making public a criminally libelous forgery which you know to be a forgery!"

"That I know to be a forgery! Where do you get that stuff? I know damned well that book is the real thing!"

"Then if you don't already know it is a forgery, I can convince you that it is a forgery. I've got the proof, and I've it right here."

"Convince me, can you? Say, you young bluffer, I'm going to call you on that." Bradley set down the telephone, and challengingly and defiantly sneered at Clifford: "Now go ahead and convince me! Bring on your proof!"

CLIFFORD crossed to the door and stepped out. When he re-entered, he had with him the person that his innocent-seeming request to Bradley, at the beginning of the conference, had held in waiting without. This person was the haggard, furtive-eyed Steve Fosdick. Everyone in the room started at this wholly unexpected appearance.

Clifford led Fosdick to the front of Bradley's desk. "Here's the witness by whom I'll prove the forgery, Bradley. Before he starts in, I'll state that all he will say is already down in affidavit form, properly sworn to and witnessed. When he's through, I'll give you a certified copy of the affidavit."

"Prove forgery by Steve Fosdick!" In his vast contempt Bradley almost laughed aloud. "Why, by that same witness I could prove—" But Bradley cut himself off.

"Now, Fosdick," Clifford began, handing over the diary, "in what you say I want you to remember what you have already sworn to. Examine that book. You recognize it?"

"I do."

"Do you know how it came into Bradley's possession?"

"I sold it to him."

"How much were you paid?"

"Five thousand dollars."

"How did you come to deal with Bradley?"

"I had heard one might get good prices from him for papers or secrets that involved rich people."

Thus far every word had been the truth. "And now, Fosdick, this book you sold Bradley, purporting to be the diary or confessions of your dead brother—did your brother write it?"

"He did not."

"Then who did write it?"

"I wrote it."

"Why, you damned cheap lying little cur!" exploded Bradley.

"Shut up, Bradley!" ordered Clifford. "You asked for proof; now listen to it!"

Again he addressed Fosdick: "So you wrote the diary yourself! Now tell us how you came to write it."

"I was in a terrible fix for money. I knew there was money in a thing like that book. My handwriting was always very much like my brother's; he was dead and could not repudiate his diary. So I wrote it and pretended that I had found it."

"And the things in that book, are they true?"

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"Not one of them. They were all made up by me."

It had been a hard night's work to drive in upon the craven Steve Fosdick that his only hope of safety was his public assumption of the exact guilt and shame that had been his brother's. Clifford had played his pawn. He now wheeled swiftly upon Bradley, contemptuously tossing the black book upon the desk.

"No need to hear the rest of Fosdick's shameful confession, of how he tried to profit by putting the fear of shame into his sister-in-law. The rest is all in this copy of his affidavit." Clifford threw the copy down before Bradley. "You have heard enough to prove that that book is a forgery!"

"Fosdick lies! I don't believe it!"

"Listen, Bradley, and get this!" Clifford drove at him. "Just now I don't give one little damn whether you believe it or not! Fosdick has sworn it is a forgery and that he is the forger. He is willing to go into court and say the same. That clears Mrs. Fosdick. She has nothing to fear. So that one-hundred-thousand-dollar book is not worth one cent to her! And get this, too, Bradley, and let it sink in: since the very day I started in with you, that book has not been worth a cent!"

For a moment Bradley did not speak. Almost he looked as if he believed Clifford. Then again he smiled scoffingly.

"Rot, Clifford! All damned rot! If the book is worth nothing, and you've known it, then why have you strung along these negotiations—why have you let these people come here and hand me over a hundred thousand good dollars?"

AT last the supreme moment toward which Clifford had been building had arrived, the moment upon which he had staked everything. Into that moment he flung himself with a fury that raged onward in a torrent—that gave no one a moment for reflection or analysis.

"Why? You ask me why?" he shouted with the suddenly unleashed voice of triumph, his fist cracking down upon the desk. "I'll tell you why! Because from the very start, Bradley, I've been after you. I've not been interested in the Fosdicks; I've just used them. In their affair I merely saw a chance to land you! And by God, this time I've landed you! Landed you for blackmail by means of libelous forged documents, which you doubtless knew were forged! Got you with four witnesses to your deed! Got you with the goods on, for that hundred thousand paid you was all money marked for evidence! Got you with marked money on you! You thought you were setting a clever trap for Mrs. Fosdick, and you never guessed that I have been using your own trap to catch you! You've had an officer waiting outside. Well, so have I, and my officer's name is Jimmy Kelley. In another second you and all the evidence are going to be in Jimmy Kelley's hands!"

Clifford broke off and seized the telephone. "Hello, outside—tell Jimmy Kelley—"

He felt a swooping tug, and he saw a flushed Bradley holding an uprooted telephone connection. Clifford let the phone go crashing to the floor and made a lunge at the little black book on the desk. But Bradley's swifter hand captured it. When Clifford came erect, he was looking into a pistol in Bradley's right hand.

"Stand back, stand back, all of you—I've got you all covered!" Bradley snapped at them, his black eyes glittering. "So you've got me, Clifford—got me with the goods on! So you've got me with the evidence, eh!"

Bradley's words were a gritted taunt. He put the black book in his mouth, and with his left hand drew out the packet of bills and tossed it upon the table.

"There's your marked money! I know nothing at all about it!" And then again he ordered: "Stand back, all of you! I've got you all covered!"

With his left hand and strong white teeth Bradley ripped the leather cover from the little book and tore the pages into fragments. He moved sidewise to his fireplace and tossed the fragments upon the glowing logs. The paper leaped into flames. Bradley's pistol maintained its menace until the flames were gone.

Then behind his unswerving pistol he moved sidewise to his open safe, and within it his left hand searched. The hand came out with two rolls, one of photographic prints and one of film. Again Bradley moved sidewise to his fireplace. First into the fire went the compact roll of prints. It burned more slowly than the shredded paper, but in a few moments was black ashes. Then in went the roll of celluloid. There was a swift flare, and all was over.

BRADLEY tossed the gun into the drawer of his desk, thrust hands into his pockets, and laughed mockingly, masterfully, his black eyes ashine with his triumph.

"So, Clifford, you've got me, have you! Got me with the goods on! Well, now call in your cop, and show him your evidence! I'll let Jimmy Kelley take my office apart in his search for evidence, and if he finds a scrap, I'll pay my own taxi-fare to jail. The place is yours. So go on—call in your cop—show him your evidence!"

Again Bradley laughed masterfully.

Clifford made no reply to this. He had no desire, and was too worn with suspense and his effort. He picked up the hundred thousand dollars from the desk, and quietly turned his back upon Bradley's gloatingly triumphant figure. The money he silently handed to the pale, mystified McKane—for to McKane, in his ignorance, all that he had seen happen was action without meaning. Clifford then turned to Mrs. Fosdick.

She was still staring with wide eyes, her face a mask of awe, at the fireplace in which she had seen the terror of her life go up in flames. She was the statue of one who has just looked upon a swift and unbelievable miracle, and who has not yet awakened to the fact that the miracle is a fact of her own world.

"Things are all right now, aren't they, Mrs. Fosdick?" Clifford asked her gently.

At that she awakened.

"Mr. Clifford!" she gasped. "Oh, Mr. Clifford!" and then she seized his two arms in the rush of her suddenly released emotion, in the paroxysm of her almost hysterical relief. Her eyes were swimming with tears. "Oh, Mr. Clifford, it was wonderful—I never dreamed anything could be so wonderful!" poured from her in gasping, sobbing admiration and gratitude. "And to think, not only the book gone—but the pictures and the films! You were right when you said there would be pictures! Oh, to think that that's all out of my life—that I'll never have to fear again! Oh, Mr. Clifford, if I lived forever, I could never thank you—never, never thank you as much as—"

"Say, what's the meaning of all this?" suddenly broke in the sharp voice of Bradley.

Clifford gave him no heed. "I'll come for tea this afternoon, Mrs. Fosdick," he said, smiling down at her, "and let you finish your thanks then."

Her mind had flashed back to their first meeting. "A professional friend, you called yourself," she breathed in awe. "What a friend you've been to me! Oh, what a friend!"

"Friendship is just my business, Mrs. Fosdick. I think you need now never have another fear. And I know that you are going to be very, very happy in your marriage—and you must remember that I am to have an invitation to your wedding."



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She caught McKane's hand, and gave him the half of a smile of radiant happiness. "Oh, neither of us could feel we were really being married if you were not there!"

"And now perhaps you will explain things to Mr. McKane?"

"Everything! Just as soon as we get home!"

Her gratitude could not wait till tea-time, and she thanked Clifford yet again. Then the mystified McKane thanked him.

"YOU wait here a minute, Clifford!" demanded Bradley, as all his visitors started to leave.

When the others had gone, taking with them the furtive and frightened Fosdick, Clifford crossed the room and once more faced Bradley across the flat barrier of his desk. The black eyes bored into him.

"What is it, Bradley?"

"Out with it now! What was all this last hullabaloo about?"

Clifford considered a moment. Then he spoke:

"You will undoubtedly learn the facts some day, so you might as well know them now. The simple truth is—"

But Bradley interrupted. No longer was his mind disordered by the panic of Clifford's climax.

"Young Fosdick lied. That diary was the genuine diary of his dead brother."

"Yes. Genuine in the sense that the dead brother had really written it. But false in every other sense."

"But that diary did represent real value."

"Yes. It was as dangerous to Mrs. Fosdick as if it had been genuine. And therefore it was as valuable to you as if it had been genuine."

"Then for the last hour, Clifford, you've just been playing with me?"

"I've played you the best I've known how."

There was a moment of silence, of weighing events and consequences, while the two

stood staring at each other. Then Bradley's eyes went to the fireplace, in which the Fosdick evidence had just gone up in flames, and with it had gone up a hundred thousand dollars and the possibility of far more. For a space Bradley seemed to study the significance of the fireplace and the blackened flakes which but a few minutes before had been the Fosdick diary. His gaze then returned to Clifford, and again those black eyes bored into him.

Clifford held himself tensed, trying to be ready for any kind of swift action, for any spectacular retaliation. He well knew the courage, the resourcefulness, the williness, the audacity, the great physical power, the lightning and the dynamite in the man. What Bradley did do was perhaps the most amazing thing he could have done; and yet nothing could have been more in keeping with the man's self-control, his character and his philosophy.

What he did do was to wave a graceful hand toward an easy-chair before his open fire.

"Sit down for a bit of a chat," he invited.

CLIFFORD obeyed. Bradley dropped his relaxed figure into the adjoining chair and thrust out his legs toward the glowing logs. Then from a drawer of his desk he took a box of cigars, and with the same easy, somewhat official gesture with which in their old days together he had offered cigars, he tendered the box to Clifford.

"Have a smoke, Bob?"

"Thanks. Don't mind if I do."

And with the same easy, somewhat official gesture with which he had accepted cigars in Bradley's office back in the old Headquarters days, Clifford took a cigar. He smoked in silence for several moments. Then through the smoke of his Havana, Bradley remarked, almost casually, but very pleasantly:

"Anyhow, Bob, I taught you your business."

THE FEEDER

(Continued from page 87)

restaurant into the kitchens, bearing trays as Salome must have borne the salver, thrust at arm's-length above her head. Her body was as flexible and as strong as a boy's, and she walked with a peculiar, fascinating thrust of the hips which Victor supposed was French. Her name was Louise Bertrand, and she came from the Swiss province of Léman. She had the thick, gold hair of a peasant woman, the white, strong throat, the strong arms.

"Café brûlot! Toute de suite!"

"Canard à la Tour de l'argent!"

"Oui."

Victor, clad in a rubber apron, immersed to the elbows in hot suds, stared at her. He waited for the baize doors to swing before the thrust of her young body. Almost he forgot Jo.

Louise Bertrand would smile at him. She had the Gallic indifference to generosity—it couldn't hurt you to smile at a poor fat dog of a dish-washer. Her upper lip lifted away from her white teeth. "B'jour!" And she added, very amiably: "Fat-tee!"

ONE day she said to him: "You are ver-ee unhappy. Why? A sweetheart?"

Victor shook his head. How could he explain to her that he had lost himself? How could he explain to her that he was the backbone of a lost scarecrow? It was but a step from the sink to the serving counter, but Victor never took the step. After all, who was he? A dish-washer. A failure. Nobody. Yet Louise was very lovely.

One day he juggled six plates for her and restored them to the soapsuds unbroken.

Louise's eyes were round with surprise. She paused long enough to reward him. "Ver-ee nice!" Then she backed through the door into the restaurant. This was Victor's offering.

"Be care-ful," she said one day. "If they catch you—out you go!"

Victor shrugged his shoulders. "For you!" He kissed the tips of his fingers. "I am not afraid." Whenever the chef's back was turned, he tossed plates for her delectation.

He lived in a lodging-house near the river. At night, released at last from the steaming kitchen, the rattle of dishes, the aroma of food, he prowled, looking for Jo. Every face he scrutinized. Every tall figure he followed. A catch of the heart, a suffocating hope—disappointment.

When he had saved ten dollars, he considered asking Louise to go with him to the theater. He was still wearing the cracked and greasy remnant of his better days, a pair of cloth-topped shoes. The soles were worn so thin that he could feel the cold pavement. Torn between love and pride, he stared in at shoe-displays in shop-windows—shoes of patent leather—buttoned—laced. Victor had small feet and he was proud of them. He liked to be trim. In later years, in the full flush of his glory, he was tailored in London, shod in New York and hatted in Vienna, with cravats from Paris and gloves from a particular shop on the Toledo in Naples. Now, with a pang of memory, he tore himself away from the shoes of his desire and went to the restaurant. He waited for Louise with a new feeling of tenderness, since he had renounced for her sake. He couldn't have both happiness and shoes. "Mam'selle—" he began.

Louise rested the tray on the edge of the sink. With a deep breath she drew herself up, stretched, like a healthy kitten.

He made known his desire. "A little supper. A show. I'm not much, but I'd like—"

"Sure! Oui. Certainement!"

Sunday night they met. Louise wore a hat made of velvet pansies, a dress which buttoned from throat to hem, and high-heeled slippers.

She had the warmest, softest eyes Victor had ever seen.

"You're not so fat any more, Fat-tee. Maybe you grieve. A girl. Eh?"

He told her, then, about Jo.

"He's wonderful. Marvelous—a genius. Why, he is the greatest eccentric dancer in the world. Besides, he has a fine voice. And a sense of humor. There's no one like him. We were only waiting for a chance. Any day, it might have turned—luck, I mean. And then I lost him."

Louise listened. "Poor Fat-tee!" She tried to comfort him. "Maybe you only imagine. Maybe you dream. Maybe you never see this man, this clown."

A terrible doubt swept Victor's mind. Then he shook his head. "No, I didn't imagine, Louise. I suffered. Now I know. I suffered."

"Why?"

"Because he was great. Great and cruel. I can't be cruel, Louise, because I am not great."

A strange look came into her eyes. "It is true. To be good is to lose much."

MANY years later Victor recalled his first dinner with Louise. "I should have talked to her about herself, not about Jo. I should have told her that she was pretty. A woman doesn't want to listen to talk of a man's friend. I was a damned fool!"

After dinner they went to the theater. Louise took Victor's arm. In the contact, light as a breath, Victor forgot his shoes, his poverty, his loss.

The theater was a narrow, gilded, stuffy place given over to the varieties. In the semidarkness, Louise pressed close to Victor, her breath quick and shallow, her eyes deep with excitement. "I love the theater," she whispered. And Victor squeezed her hand. They sat with their fingers interlocked. To Victor it was the pinnacle of experience, a matter epic and tremendous; to Louise it was usual, not to be thought of. She was one of those women whose chief protection is their casual acceptance of little happenings. She was as affectionate as a kitten, but she kept her heart to herself.

Victor felt the old, familiar soul-tickle—he ached to be on the stage, to display his neat waist in a trim sash, his well-rounded, muscular legs, his small feet. He suffered for the third-rate performers up there, yet held them in contempt, loathed them because they failed to do honor to a great profession. But Louise liked everything. Her body was vibrant. Victor thought sadly: "Why is it the women we love are never artists?"

A Japanese tumbler, fat, oily, with skin the color and texture of tan satin, contorted himself upon a cushion. A girl in tights sang. Two comedy Irishmen told grimy stories. The curtain fell and rose again to disclose a confused back-drop littered with advertisements.

A voice sounded in the wings, and Victor froze in his chair.

"It's Jo. Oh, my God, it's Jo!"

Jo came upon the stage wearing French heels and a picture hat. He had an initiated, bold stare, a gross swagger. He sang. But Victor heard nothing. Whispering to Louise, "I'll be back," he fled.

He was waiting in the wings as Jo backed off the stage in a swirl of spangled skirts.

"Jo!"

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Jo stared; his painted mouth stretched into a wide smile. He grabbed Victor's arm. "Come on with me! Let's shoot 'em that story about the bathtub. Sure! Just as you are!"

Victor found himself upon an unfamiliar stage. Instinctively he dropped into the brisk, bantering air that was a foil for Jo's vulgarity. The patter came to his lips. Somewhere out in that blurred crowd Louise was watching. His shoes!

"And what did you say, my dear?"

"I says to him, I says—"

They were laughing. Jo's ribald screech tore the air to shreds.

VICTOR trotted at the heels of the genius into the wings and into the arms of an irate manager. "What the 'ell! Who are you?"

Jo said, grinning: "My partner. Victor and Jo. After this, we go on together. He's the quickest feeder in captivity. Throws me the lines the way they throw fish to the seals. Flip! Flop! Victor, meet Mr. Reiss."

He was gone, to snatch a call, leaving Victor in agony.

When he came back, minus his wig and carrying the plumed hat, he said: "Come to the dressing-room. You're signed."

It was a dirty place with plastered walls upon which idle thespians had scrawled names, messages and jests. A gas-burner in a wicket shone full on Jo's big, painted face, the damp, curly hair that grew in an

upstanding bush. He did not ask where Victor had been. Stepping out of the ruffled skirt and kicking it into a corner, he lighted a cigarette and scrubbed at his neck with a towel. "I thought you'd turn up. You're just in time. We're going to Mobile tomorrow. Then Pensacola, Jacksonville, Savannah, Charleston—"

"Tomorrow!"

With a look of panic, a feeling of desolation, Victor shook his head. "I can't."

"Why not?"

"A girl—"

"Take her with you."

"I can't. I hardly know her."

"Where is she?"

"Out front."

"Get her. I'll talk to her."

Suddenly, with one of his sweetest smiles, with something disarming and lovable in his gesture, he put his hand on Victor's shoulder. "You've got to come, girl or no girl. This is my chance."

Joe Victor stumbled through the darkened theater, against a blare of cornets, playing "The Stars and Stripes Forever," to Louise.

"You were splen-did," she said, and he saw her warm, brown eyes, shining at him. "But that other—your friend! Women are not like that! He hates us, no?"

They met Jo at the stage door. Jo, superb in an overcoat with a fur collar, a pearl-gray derby and spats. He seemed to glorify the street and to add a sort of luster to cobblestones and peeling walls. He invited them to supper at the Louisane.

"At my expense, mes enfants!"
"Ah!" Louise was staccato. "Vous parlez Français!"

All the way across town Victor was left in ignorance of what they said. Louise still clung to his arm, yet she sagged away from him, strained toward this paragon who spoke French. A bitterness, something hateful and poisonous, stole through Victor's veins, weakening him. He lagged. For the first time in his life he pitied himself.

EVEN then Jo had the manner which assures the attention of waiters. He looked like a celebrity long before he was one. Victor never looked like a celebrity; he looked like everyone else.

In those days the floor of the Louisane was sanded. But then, as now, Alciatore was inspired. Jo ordered crayfish bisque, hot bread. But first, absinthe—a little green drink in a little frosted glass.

Louise drank slowly, her eyes on Jo.

"He is a strange man, your friend," she said to Victor. "He is a big baby."

Louise was like most women; she yearned over Jo because he was ruthless, fascinating and outrageous. The absinthe penetrated her veins and filled her with a sweet languor. Jo, leaning sideways, with his curly head close to hers, told her that she was the prettiest girl he had ever seen. He enumerated her charms—eyes, nose, mouth, chin, ears, hair. She listened. She had forgotten Victor. She was swimming in a twilight haunted by strange dreams; she was no longer Louise—she was beyond Louise.

Victor drank deeply and steadily. After a while Louise and Jo receded, grew dim. The clatter of dishes, the passage of black waiters, voices, all were infinitely removed.

He was not surprised when he heard Jo say: "She is going with us tomorrow, Victor. Wake up! Louise is going with us."

He came out of his drunken stupor, saw their flushed, ardent faces clearly, as in a crystal, smiled at them and fell asleep again, with his head in his arms.

LOUISE went with them: Mrs. Vittorio Giovannini. On her left hand a thick gold ring, at her waist a cluster of white roses.

The train pulled out of the station, bearing the three of them toward a future beyond reckoning. Louise blushed and hid her face on Jo's shoulder.

"I don't know why I loved you. . . . The minute I saw you. . . . Do you love me?"

"Extravagantly."

To Victor, in Jo's absence, Louise explained the miracle. "I cannot say what it was, except that he touched my heart. He told me everything—how he has suffered and gone hungry. Many and many a time hungry! You were very drunk, my dear Victor, and heard nothing. We poured out our souls to each other. We hid nothing. Nothing! When he asked me to marry him, I said: 'Oui! Certainment! Sure!' as if I had known him all my life. I am alone, dear friend. To me, my heart must speak. I love him."

"So do I," Victor confessed.

They began the steep ascent toward fame, from city to city, from theater to theater. Victor was manager, because Jo had no "head." He was permitted to be moody, to indulge himself in fits of depression and flights of temperament. Louise mothered them both. "Any socks today, Victor? I'll mend them on the train." Or: "Jo, you've forgotten your muffler. Here it is. Twice around!"

They were playing in Chicago when Dawson saw them—Dawson, the shrewd, indefatigable, silent maker of theatrical reputations.

"Jo! Louise!"

Victor broke into the dressing-room one day, his round face drained of color. "Daw-

son's been out front. He wants to see us." Jo, wearing satin corsets and smoking a cigar, seemed to be frozen. When he turned away from the mirror, he tried to smile, and his huge mouth twisted into a grimace of pain. "My chance! Dawson! By God, Victor, it means success!"

Upon a card, scrawled in pencil, the producer had written: "My hotel. Five sharp." And the famous initials, "J. D."

Dawson received them in his bedroom. He did not, during the interview, remove his hat.

"I am putting on an extravaganza. Not a fairy story set to music. The public's sick and tired of *Robin Hoods* and *Little Miss Muffets*. I am going to give 'em a taste of Montmartre. Real music, real comedy, beautiful women. Art sugar-coated! Break 'em in easy. Ten years from now we'll have a sophisticated audience, not only in New York but in Oshkosh. Then I'll let myself go."

He offered them a five-year contract.

"I want both of you. One's no good without the other. This *Mary* of yours is a biting cartoon—it has teeth. If you were a female impersonator, I'd give you the gate. I hate the brood. As it is, you're the personified bitterness of men toward women. You're immense."

Victor and Jo went out into the street. "J. D.," Victor whispered. Jo echoed: "J. D."

They threaded the teeming Loop like somnambulists. Wherever there was a saloon, they stopped and drank solemnly: "To J. D.!"

VICTOR and Jo became the center of Dawson's yearly extravaganza, a glorified vaudeville intended for metropolitan audiences. J. D.'s taste in women was excellent. Aloof, opulent, with the studied gait of *mannequins*, the Dawson beauties prepared the way for *Mary*.

When she came, incredibly loose-jointed, hysterical, poured into sequins and burdened with plumes, New York fell at her feet.

She was a jade, a creature of low wit and generous heart.

Behind her, correct, unbending, stone-faced, Victor.

"I says to him—"

"What did you say, my dear?"

"I says—"

And then that maudlin shriek of laughter, that physical collapse.

When Victor and Jo danced, you saw breathless loveliness. It was no careless two-stepping. Months of work in a ballet-school, mastering the fundamentals, tearing their bodies apart, building them up again, muscle by muscle. Pantomime, with Cervelli from La Scala. Heartbreaking weeks in a gymnasium, teaching Victor to stand on his head. And finally, emerging, that thoughtless and perfect symmetry, that flowing of attitudes, that nimble, exciting, transient, irresistible foolery. It lasted but a moment and left New York clamoring. There were no encores. If you craved more, you came again.

It is not until the crowd recognizes an artist that the intellectuals attempt to classify him.

Jo became the object of much obtuse speculation. From the dramatic dailies, inky sheets containing the frenzied protests of hired press-agents, Jo was graduated to the monthlies, the literary reviews, the supplements.

He was photographed, interviewed; his opinion was asked on such diverse subjects as suffrage, birth-control, education and cosmetics. At first reluctant, he came eventually to that point of naïve faith which exalts a man beyond himself. He discovered that he had only to express himself violently enough and no one would question or contradict him. Whereupon he stopped at nothing. His ego grew to be like an extra skin; he was impervious to ridicule—therefore no one took the trouble to ridicule him.



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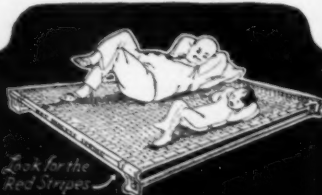
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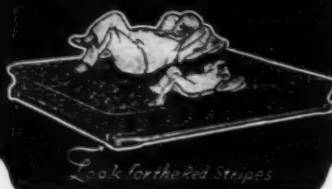
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Victor was neither interviewed nor photographed nor dissected by the scalpels of the critical fraternity. He lived Jo's life, not his own. Victor ceased to be, in the intensity of Jo's being.

They lived in an apartment because Louise despised hotels. At breakfast Louise, in orchid chiffons, pouring coffee, smiled at them both. Jo had given her a necklace of pearls and they lay against her white throat. Victor would turn his eyes away, to hide the look he knew would betray him.

A heap of letters at Jo's plate. Jo, opening them, laughing, tasting the sweet wine of flattery. "Read this one, Louise! They want me in London."

Rehearsal. The great stage darkened. A fitful twittering in the orchestra pit. Out in front, J. D. wearing a shabby overcoat and a dusty hat, apparently asleep. Girls crowding the wings.

"Hello, Mr. Victor!"

"Oh, Mr. Jo, what a won-der-ful gown! It's panne velvet, isn't it?"

Jo would pirouette on his French heels, displaying silk-clad legs, slim ankles.

At J. D.'s summons, the grilling began.

"No! No! Cut that out."

It was Victor's duty to check up the "gags" and to be a sort of barometer of J. D.'s reactions.

"That's great! Keep that!"

"Oh, Mr. Jo, you were simply won-der-ful!"

IN five years Victor and Jo became an institution. Successive extravaganzas were built around them; they were the hardy perennials of the metropolitan garden. They were "loaned" to London, Paris, Vienna. And Louise saw again her beloved Léman, sparkling and boisterous, her lake of the four cantons. She cried a little. "Life is so strange, Victor. I would be happy here, forever, in a little chalet. If Jo would be happy—"

Jo laughed. He pinched her chin.

"Nonsense, ducky! I belong to the world!"

Jo belonged more and more to the world, less and less to Louise. "I'm going to the club, Victor. You tell Louise not to wait up."

"How late?"

"Two-thirty. Three! Don't tie me down! If there's anything I hate it's being questioned."

Victor would enter the apartment stealthily, shamefaced, with a look of guilt. He would try to tiptoe past the drawing-room door to his own rooms—from rug to rug, holding his breath, his fat face flushed with pity. "Jo! Victor!"

He would stand rooted, as if paralyzed by the sound of that high, clear voice. And then, with a soft rustle, a sort of murmur of draperies, Louise would rush to the door. "It's you—Victor."

"Yes, me. . . . Jo's delayed."

"Supper's ready. I made Texas chile for Jo. He loves it."

"He's not coming."

"Not coming?"

She would droop a little. The corners of her mouth would turn down. And while Victor ate the chile, which he loathed, which burned and blistered his sensitive interior, Louise would rest her chin in the palm of her hand and stare at him. "I should have married you, Victor. You would have made me happy. I don't know why I love Jo as I do. . . . Victor, is he tired of me?"

"No. Oh, my dear, no!"

"He never looks at me with that sweet look any more. His eyes slide over me and away. Perhaps I made a mistake. Perhaps I am holding Jo back."

"You're a foolish woman. Just because Jo's popular—"

She smiled and shook her head.

"I was happier when we were poor. Then

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he needed me. I am afraid of success, Victor. It eats at the heart."

WHEN Kitty Parker entered Dawson's company, Victor saw for the first time what had happened to Jo. Kitty and Kitty's friends were what took Jo away from Louise. Kitty Parker was an Englishwoman and had been a favorite of the English public for fifteen years. Tall, thin, with coarse features and a contralto speaking-voice, she had, nevertheless, an elusive and penetrating charm. Her good-nature, her worldliness, her generosity were proverbial. She wore eccentric gowns that buttoned up to her chin, swathing her long throat in the Bernhardt fashion. She sang Cockney ballads, French *chansonnettes* and American jazz songs, gleanings of café and street, with a fine appreciation and a just emphasis and she won New York, as she had won London.

Her house became, in a way, the battleground of the more popular theorists. Kitty Parker had no morals to speak of; she was not an intellectual, but she was an inspired hostess. She offered the best of everything and left her guests alone.

Jo became her slave.

At first Victor was optimistic. "He'll get over it. It's only a madness."

But Jo never did things by halves. . . .

"Jo, I'd come home tonight, if I were you. Louise is lonely."

Jo was adjusting his wig. Victor saw his face in the mirror. A look passed across it of suffering and impatience. "Louise is awfully fond of you, Victor. Take her out somewhere, after the show—one of the dance-places. I'm going to Kitty's."

Victor permitted himself a tempered irony: "Again?"

Jo applied a lip-stick, pursing his mouth. His eyes blazed. "You don't understand. I go to Kitty's because I get what I crave. I'm not in love with her. Put that out of your head! I'm in love with the sort of talk I hear at her house. Ideas! All my life I've starved for ideas. I've been pulling out my own brain for fifteen years. When I met Kitty, the tank was almost empty. What have you and Louise given me?"

"Friendship," Victor reminded him. He felt cold, strangely still, as if he would never breathe again, as if he had died.

"I know! Damn it, Victor, I'm grateful! I'm not a cad. I'm fond of both of you." He turned violently. "But I can't live on platitudes. Chile con carne and 'Do you love me, Jo?' I'm sick of it. Sick and tired. I'm an artist. I deserve the prestige, the privilege—"

He broke off. "What's the use? You wouldn't understand. You want me to be a domesticated simpleton. I'll tell you," he said violently, "you'd kill me, if I'd let you. I'm not going to let you."

"No," Victor said.

A bell rang.

"Fifteen minutes!"

VICTOR found himself on the stage. Mary's ribald laughter sounded unfamiliar. For Victor it held a note of tragic finality. But the audience applauded, and as the white spot swept upon them, the orchestra played a tango. This tango of theirs had captivated New York; yet Victor's part in it was overlooked. He danced in the shadow, as it were, of Mary's caricature. He was the symmetrical background for her extravagance.

Now with a dull heart Victor thought: "He's sick and tired of us." The words had penetrated like a knife-thrust; he felt them sticking out between his ribs.

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He stopped at a florist's shop in the Circle and bought a spray of mimosa.

To Louise, he lied: "Jo sent it. He's in conference with J. D."

"Anything wrong?"

"No." He smiled at her. "You'd better go to bed, Louise. You look tired."

He watched her go to her room, carrying the spray of mimosa as if it were a sleeping child. . . .

For a while Jo was repentant. He could be very lovable.

"You mustn't take me seriously, Victor. I'm irritable. Need a rest."

He gave Louise a string of crystals. She thanked him and put them away. "They are like tears," she said to Victor.

SWIFTLY the tragedy came: like a wind that twists, funnel-shaped, out of a clear sky; like a tide, resistless.

J. D. sent for Victor.

"Jo's been gambling. I guess Kitty roped him in. She's a bad egg. He came to me last night for twenty thousand. I didn't let him have it. I thought I'd tell you."

He shifted in his chair. "They've got him. They've squeezed him dry. Kitty and her crowd! That's the way she bleeds English noblemen and South American millionaires and poor, silly boys. Can you beat it? With that face!" J. D. gave Victor a shrewd glance. "I'm counting on you."

Victor stammered: "I'll go over there."

"You'd better."

It was ten o'clock in the morning. Victor went first to his bank and discovered that the joint account of Victor and Jo was overdrawn. Murmuring a promise and an apology, he emerged again into the familiar street, surprised to find that in a quarter of an hour its aspect had changed. The city was no longer a friendly stage; it was a city, inimical, immense and crowded.

In a booth he telephoned to Louise.

"Where's Jo?"

"I don't know. He hasn't been here since yesterday morning. I didn't tell you—I hoped—oh, Victor!"

"Don't you worry."

He hurried across town to Kitty's little house, her little, white-stone house in the East Sixties, her discreet little house which presented so blank a face to the street.

Kitty received him in her study on the second floor, a room furnished with a pert self-consciousness in the Louis Napoleon manner.

"I don't know where he is," she said. "He owes me twenty-five thousand dollars. It is not likely, my friend, that either of us will see him again."

Victor went back to J. D.

"I didn't even damn her! I held my tongue. I cleared out of there! She got everything he had—and more."

"You'd better phone his wife."

"What'll I say?"

"Anything. Jolly her along."

Victor summoned a smile. . . . "This you, Louise? Victor. . . . I just wanted to say—Jo's all right. I'll bring him home after the show."

"I'll cook some chile. Don't be late!"

"You betch!"

They waited.

"He'll turn up for the show."

J. D. shook his head. "He was mad over that woman. . . . Jo's a genius. He belongs to the crowd. . . . You've got to forgive a lot."

"I know."

At seven o'clock Victor went to the dressing-room. He heard Kitty's voice in the corridor and slammed the door. He dressed slowly. Jo's man, a silent, gifted and facile negro, prepared the great comedian's costume, shaking out lingerie, petticoats, a gown frosted with crystal, a wrap of ermine. Victor watched him. He seemed unaware of the threatened, the imminent disaster. Once,

he said: "Overture, sir." And Victor heard the thin, removed wail of violins.

At eight-fifteen Jo had not come. At eight-thirty the negro opened the door and peered out, admitting the silken rustle of Kitty's panniered skirts as she swept toward the wings, a loud burst of music, and a strident voice from the stage:

"Give me a rose, to remember you by
Through years. . . .

The door closed.

"Mr. Jo is very late, sir."

"I know. Maybe something has happened—an accident."

At nine o'clock J. D. himself, calm, sleepy, appeared for a moment.

"I've cut the act."

Victor waited until the house was empty. Then he crossed the darkened stage to J. D.'s office.

The producer glanced up without a change of expression.

"I've just had a call from police headquarters. They found him in the river."

"Dead?"

"Well, yes—dead. He drowned himself last night, after he left the theater."

J. D. rose. He paused to strike a match and to light a cigarette. Then he put his arm around Victor's shoulder.

"I guess we'll have to lie to his wife—to everybody. An accident. I can fix it with the press. That's all anyone knows, anyhow—except you and me and Kitty Parker—and I've muzzled her."

THE genius lay upon his bed, a scarecrow no longer, a wooden man, the effigy of a clown. They buried him with ceremony. His pallbearers were writers, playwrights, actors, men of affairs. They heaped wreaths of laurel where he lay. And he became an American immortal.

Louise was weighted with crape. She sat all day, dry-eyed and still, reading columns of praise, columns of analysis, columns of sorrow.

"He was so wonderful, Victor! I loved him so!"

"We all did, Louise."

Victor lied. They had no money because—a hundred reasons. Louise listened and believed. Victor was so honest, so hurt, so bereft.

"We have always lived beyond our means, Louise. New York is expensive. Then, the clubs—dues, you know—entertaining—a thousand demands. Jo just didn't save. He was too generous. He couldn't say no to anyone. He loaned thousands to poor ham actors out of work. . . . Well, we're poor again, Louise. And Jo's gone."

The electric sign came down. In its place the words: "*Dawson-De Long*" blazed against the sky day and night. A new comedian, long-faced, lugubrious, in a sepulchral voice told perilous little stories that convulsed New York.

Victor stood in the wings, his heart empty, staring out at the light-flooded stage and at figures moving gracefully, mysteriously, before an invisible audience.

After a while Victor realized that he was only cluttering up the wings. The girls who had always called out, "Hello, Mr. Victor!" brushed by, laughing and whispering. His dressing-room was occupied by De Long. Kitty had been banished. In her place was a Frenchwoman in flamboyant, plumed head-dresses—a woman who had never heard of Jo and who thought Victor a fat, privileged Johnny.

Victor was a body without a soul.

For nearly fifteen years he had listened to applause; he had shared in a phenomenal success. He had been Victor, of Victor and Jo. Strangers had recognized and saluted him: "There's Victor. Fellow with Jo, you know. He's a scream, that Jo. Marvelous!" And now Victor walked alone. He sagged

in his smart, flashy clothes. For the first time you would have said that Victor was an old man. And as he sagged, his face lost its shining roundness and became loose, folded. His eyes were dim, pathetic, like the eyes of a dog.

Louise sold her pearls. "Just to help out, until you get a start, Victor." She moved into a little flat near the river, and papered the walls with photographs of Jo: Jo in a picture hat with bare shoulders and a beauty patch; Jo in white-face, a poignant clown; Jo in riding clothes. . . . "I can't be lonely."

When Victor came, she cooked Texas chile for him.

"I'm going to get a part any day now," he told her. "Then we'll be on Easy Street."

Something in those calm brown eyes suggested a doubt, a fear for Victor. She squeezed his hand. She did not know that Victor was living in a Sixth Avenue rooming-house, where, for a quarter, he bought the dubious luxury of a dirty bed in a dormitory shared by thirty men.

He made the rounds of the managers, men who had once begged, bribed and wept for Victor and Jo's services, but who now seemed to have forgotten both Victor's name and his career.

"You know, as well as I do, that when a team breaks up, it can't be reassembled—unless, of course, you find another Jo."

"There'll never be another."

"You're right. . . . I'm sorry, old man."

The agents began to recognize his shabby elegance—check suit, spats, pearl-gray derby. He would wait patiently behind the wooden barrier erected to protect the delicate agent from the ferocious and often hungry chorus girl. Hours would pass. The more favored would swing through the wicket. "Hello, Mr. Cole, any news today?" "Hello, Ruby. Yep. You're to see Daugherty's musical director. Here's the name."

Finally: "Here, you! What you want?" Victor would press against the barrier, his cheeks flushed. "I am J. Victor. Has anything. . . . Is there anything—"

Occasionally, Victor would pick a plum from the barren tree of success. Doing the "stairway circuit" of screen agents, receiving a day's work in a studio with a crowd of extras, would buy a bunch of those pale yellow roses Louise loved, and a hundred cigarettes. Painted a bilious yellow and wearing a dinner jacket, Victor would wait for the summons: "Camera!" For a brief moment, then, he would cross before the lens, in the blurred and indeterminate rôle of "atmosphere."

Six months later it might be that some old-timer, staring at the screen upon which this shadow danced, would say: "That fellow on the steps—the little saggy one—looks like Victor. Remember? Victor and Jo?"

IN two years Victor became a memory. He joined the dreaded army of failures. He had never learned to say: "I am." But now, treading the streets, climbing endless stairs, knocking at doors, accepting rebuffs, he learned to say: "I never have been." And the idea came to him, inflicting physical pain, that Jo had been to blame.

"Jo swallowed me alive."

He began to see the wrong of such a surrender as his. He began to see the importance of selfhood.

"I was a juggler, but I was a damned good juggler."

He was standing on the corner of Forty-second Street when a colossal fact presented itself.

"I still am!" he said aloud.

He moved on, for fear he might be arrested, for shabby men should not talk to themselves.

He saw for the first time that he had fed Jo's vanity. He had played the sedu-



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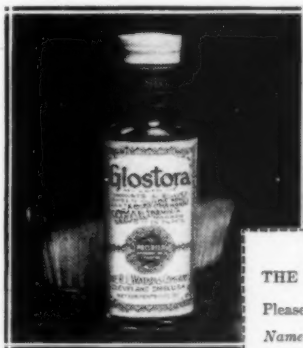
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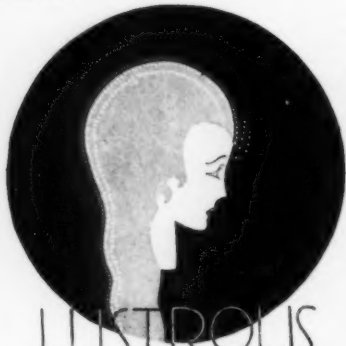
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lous ape; he had offered his sensitive skin to the hurts inflicted by the genius; he had gone unrewarded, unrecognized, unloved.

"I did not claim myself," he thought.
"I was there all the time!" Then he spoke aloud again: "I am still here!" A girl in a red hat turned to stare at him.

"Yes," he shouted after her, "I'm still here."

"I see you," she said.
"No one else ever has," he retorted with a sort of wonder.

Obsessed by this idea, he went to Louise. She lived in one of those tenement dwellings equipped with the push-button system. A double row of metal plates bore the names of the flat dwellers above: Krinsky—Flannigan—Nielsen—Ohlsen—Jo, Mrs. Victor Jo.

Victor pressed the button and leaned against the door, waiting for the little click-click which meant that she had run into the kitchen to admit him. He waited for an appreciable moment. He rang again. Then, as if with reluctance, she answered, and he ran up the dark, carpeted stairs, craning his neck to peer up that narrow funnel. Was she watching? Usually her head would be silhouetted against the skylight and she would call: "Is that you, Victor?"

He found her leaning against the door, and he forgot himself in the shocking discovery that she had been crying. He remembered the strong, fearless thrust of her body, years ago. Now she drooped, and there was something dreadful in her face, as if the light behind it had gone out.

"Louise!"
"I'm glad you've come."

THEY went into the sitting-room and sat facing the manifold image of Jo.

"The money's gone, Victor. I've been living on that string of pearls for three years."

"Poor girl—poor Louise!"

Suddenly she burst out: "I'm sick and tired of being alone, Victor! Don't remind me of Jo's pictures—I remember what I said. I thought, with them to look at, that I'd never be alone. But I was wrong. I can't remember Jo. I look and look at those photographs, trying to remember. I've forgotten his voice. I've forgotten his touch. All I can hear and see is Mary."

Victor, I always hated Jo when he was Mary! Listen to me! Listen to me! I hated him! I've never said that to a living soul, not even to myself, until now. But it's true." She bent down and hid her face in her crossed arms, rocking back and forth, moaning. "The Jo I loved died, too. I can't find him. He left nothing of himself. . . . Victor, was it because he didn't love us?"

Victor patted her shoulder. "Now, you stop thinking about it. Jo was a great man. He was greater than you and me put together. Of course we didn't understand him. We never will."

He touched her smooth hair ever so lightly. "You remember the hills back of Lucerne? The smell of the grass—the lake down below! Remember?"

"I haven't got a cent," she said.

"Don't you worry."

He forgot to tell her about himself. That must wait for a quiet time of friendship.

"You cook me some Texas chili, Louise. I need a good lunch. I've got a date with J. D."

"J. D.!"

"Yep."

He tipped back in his chair, beaming.

"J. D."

"Not—not a job?"

"Yep."

"Oh, Victor!"

Suddenly she caught his head between her hands and tipping his face up to her, kissed him. "Oh, Victor, I'm so glad for you!"

He suffered a great, dark, engulfing weak-

ness. He closed his eyes, and leaned against her.

"I guess I'm tired."

"We're both tired."

He had lied to her. Yet to have spoken the words, "A date with J. D.," kindled a sort of fire within him.

When he left her, she leaned over the banister and watched him all the way down.

"Good-by. Good luck!"

"I'll be back at six!"

He walked across town, and at his side, invisible, his lie and his dream: "Dawson presents Victor—"

"Why not?" he demanded of a policeman.

"Why not, sure? Move along, or I'll run you in."

Dawson's offices were in the Dawson Theater at Fifth Street. Victor entered with a certain swagger. To a pretty girl who asked, "Who shall I say?" Victor gave his name. "You're to come right in," came the answer.

J. D. was sitting behind a littered desk, crumpled, wearing his hat. His eyes that saw everything, saw, without seeming to see, Victor's shreds and patches and the sudden sick pallor of his face.

"You haven't been very friendly," J. D. remarked. "Three years! You knew where to find me."

"I want a job."

"Not so fast."

Then Victor saw J. D.'s hand. He clasped it. Solemnly they stared at each other.

"You were always the best of that team, Victor. Without you Jo would have flopped. You held him together. He was the melody, but you were the orchestra, the chorus and the scenery."

He considered a moment.

"It takes a genius," he said, "to be a good feeder."

A great light burst in Victor's soul.

"I juggle, too. I'm pretty fair at it, J. D."

"You don't say!" The producer rose, hoisting himself out of his chair with both hands. "Come on down to the theater, and we'll see what you can do. . . . Three years—it's a damned long time."

The stage was empty.

Victor sniffed the dust and the twilight, the odor of asbestos, paint and papier-mâché! He saw the triple tiers of linen-covered chairs, empty, potential, waiting for the audience which, in a few hours, would pour in from the street, alive, eager, noisy—to be hushed, held, by a word, a gesture.

"I'll need some plates and saucers."

J. D. smiled. A little squat man, he took the center of the stage. "You'll find some in La Badie's dressing-room. Third door to the right. . . . She's a Russian. Get the key from the door-man."

When Victor returned, J. D. had lighted the solitary guard-lamp, and had found and connected a small "spot" at the side. A crooked pool of light lay upon the dim stage like an old doubloon. A voice from the orchestra said dryly: "I'm here. Shoot."

What J. D. saw was a thin, pale, flabby man, who had been fat, dressed in clothes too large for him, a pair of cracked shoes and a pearl-gray derby with a dented crown.

What Victor saw was a self beyond self.

He began to juggle plates, deftly, silently, and while he juggled, he danced. Within the circle of white light, he became a grotesque figure of infinite pathos, wit and grace. He was every man, part child, part fool, part failure and, at last, in dreams, transcendent.

Out of the darkened theater, issued J. D.'s dry, unemotional voice: "You've got it, Victor."

Victor let La Badie's cups and saucers fall in a heap at his feet. He stood there, blank-eyed, smitten by success.

And J. D., crumpling suddenly, smote his knees and laughed until he cried.

MRS. ROONEY DEALS AGAIN

(Continued from page 56)

ye? This is what I get from a man that swore he loved me!"

Mrs. Rooney now fell to weeping. Reilly clutched the bar.

"Heavens," he muttered, "I'm in fer it sure enough. It's no knowledge at all I have of talking marriage to her. But I must have, or she wouldn't take on like that."

Mrs. Rooney, with head lowered against the bar, continued to sob, while Reilly's eye took in the joint.

"A man," he thought, "might make a decent living here. To hell with the sea! I'm tired of it, anyway."

He reached across the bar and touched Mrs. Rooney on the arm.

"Whist, woman, cry no more. It smothered the heart of me to see the like of ye in tears."

Mrs. Rooney looked up at him. Her eyes were not red, but bluer than ever with the gleam of conquest.

"Tell me," said Reilly, "like the good woman that ye are: do ye know who it was that shanghaied me?"

At that moment a pair of eyes looked in the door—Hogan's eyes they were, none other.

"Sure," answered Mrs. Rooney, "I don't believe ye were shanghaied at all, at all. The last words ye said to me as ye clasped me across the bar were: 'I'm off to sea now, and may God be good to ye till I come back.' Them were the very words of ye. And here ye are now, instead of placing a ring on me finger, accusing me of getting blood-money out of ye. Ah, wurra, wurra, how I wish that me poor Dan was alive! After ye went away it's a bit of a tombstone I placed on his grave."

A suspicious thought edged its way into Reilly's partly paralyzed brain: where did she get the money for Dan Rooney's tombstone? But he pushed the thought out and away as he surrendered his wits to the charm of a siren tongue. Mrs. Rooney continued to prove how faithful she could be to the man she loved.

"The stone's not finished yet, but the next money I get, there's to be a couple of lambs carved on it. Poor Dan was so fond of them, fine man that he was!"

JUST then two grimy coal-heavers walked in and up to the bar.

"A couple of beers, Mrs. Rooney," ordered the bigger of the two. "And put the foam in the bottom of the glass."

"Ah, ye poor devils," said she, "it's working ye are today. I'm after telling Mr. Reilly, here, what a fine man me Dan was."

The coal-heavers looked the one-eyed sailor over. They smiled, so that the coal-dust cracked on their faces.

"He was all right, was Dan Rooney," the big one said. "He was the man that could buckle a sailor, hey, Mrs. Rooney?"

"Here now," said she, "have one on me and no more of yer gabbing. Sure, an' it's yerselves that know that Dan's home was a sailor's home."

"Sure we do," said the smaller of the two. They looked at each other silently as they swallowed their drinks. With one more look at Reilly, they walked out of the saloon, without another word, but they linked arms as they went, and burst into a loud laugh as they stepped out on the street.

Mrs. Rooney turned to Reilly. "Sure, an' the throat of ye must be parched, standing there thinking. Here, come behind yer own bar and help yerself."

Reilly's tongue licked his lips. "Mrs. Rooney," he said with grave seriousness, "did I promise to marry ye?"

"Indade ye did, and I have me witness. If ye don't, I'll have the law on ye."



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Again Reilly's eye rambled over the bar-room. It took in everything, even to the crabs in the window. He reached over and took hold of her red hand.

"If I promised anything, I'm here to keep it, and let bygones be bygones."

"Now ye're talking like a decent civil Irishman, and sure and I know that death didn't take the last wan when it took me poor Danny. Come now, step behind the bar and help yerself. Ah, and it's the fine bartender ye'll be making, and handsome too."

In a few minutes Reilly had a bottle of porter in front of him and a happy look in the eye he turned on his Ellen. She gazed back at him with proud affection.

"When do ye get paid off?" she asked him.

"Tomorrow," he answered.

"How much have ye got coming to ye?"

"Not quite a hundred dollars."

"Ah, now, it don't make a bit of difference," said she. "It's a quiet wedding we'll be having. I know Father Tim, and a five-spot will fix him. So don't bother yer head about anything. Lave it all to me."

Mrs. Rooney looked at herself in the mirror behind the bar.

"It's a bit gray I'm getting. Do ye mind it at all?"

Reilly wiped the suds from his mouth.

"Ellen Rooney, darling, if ye was as gray as the mist and as wrinkled as a rope, I'd keep me promise to ye just the same."

"Spoken like a rare gentleman," said Mrs. Rooney, preening herself. "And for that ye'll have a taste of poor Dan's private stock."

"I'll stick to the porter," said Reilly. Memory, like a bothersome tooth, gave a warning tug, reminding him of the last taste he'd had of dead Dan's private stock. "I'll be keeping me head, Ellen Rooney, till after the weddin'."

"Ah, and that proves to me again that ye're a man worth the waiting for."

THE next day Reilly, his pay in his hand, walked into the green-front gin-mill.

"Now," says Mrs. Rooney, "drop it into yer own till, and whenever ye need a piece of change, just help yerself. Tomorrow evening we'll be having the wedding. I've arranged everything. Take it aisy, and keep yer head clear."

Reilly looked at her admiringly. "The likes of me accusing her of shanghaiing me!" he thought. "I ought to go down on me knees and beg her pardon. Ah, it's a happy man I am this day. No more watch and watch will I be keeping. Nor will I ever taste any more of their dirty lime-juice, or wormy hardtack aither. When the wind blows and the waves roll high, it's in the lee of me own little home I'll be, with Ellen in me arms, and me pipe in me mouth, and me porter foaming at me elbow, and her, God bless her, to take the chill off me heart."

While these thoughts went gullyng through Reilly's brain, Hogan stepped into the room. "Everything all right with you this evening, Mrs. Rooney?" he asked.

"Oh, indade they are, Mr. Hogan. I haven't been so happy in five and twenty years." Her blue eyes twinkled as they looked straight into Hogan's furtive ones. "Mike Reilly and me will be one before another sun sets."

Hogan went up to Reilly, offering him his hand.

"You're a lucky man," said he. "You're giving up the sea, I suppose?"

"Am I? Ask Ellen."

"Oh, yes, Mr. Hogan. I want me husband by me side, morning, noon and night."

"Mrs. Rooney," said Hogan then, "can I have a word in private with you?"

"Indade ye can. Come into this room. Sure, an' it'll be Mike's room after tonight."

The maggots of jealousy had not as yet

crawled into Reilly's seams; nevertheless he cock-billed his ear and listened to the voices in the other room.

"Ah," thought Reilly, "it's a pagan I am to be listening to her that loves me with every ounce of her fourteen stone."

He poured himself out another bumper of porter, and as he drank it he hummed a ditty:

*"Blow, ye winds, while sails are spreading.
Carry me cheerfully o'er the sea—"*

Mrs. Rooney and Hogan came back to the bar.

"All right, Hogan," she was saying, "ye'll attend to it?"

"Rely on me," he answered. "Good evening, Mr. Reilly. I'll be around to the wedding."

"Sure, an' ye'll be welcome. A friend of Ellen's is a friend of mine," returned Reilly with hearty good will.

"Well, Ellen, I'll be going now too. It's early to bed I'll be getting tonight. We have a big day ahead of us tomorrow."

"Indade, and we have, Mike Reilly. Look yer best tomorrow. It's proud of ye I want to be."

Reilly went off to his lodgings humming.

The next evening Reilly was on hand early, dressed in his best blues. His cheese-cutter cap had a list over his blind eye; the blucher boots had a rare shine and squeaked proudly, as he walked into the saloon that had a clean covering of sawdust on the floor, in honor of the evening.

Mrs. Rooney was smiling; an expansive smile it was, that said all's well with the world. A round bunch 'of forget-me-nots reposed in the deep crevice of her heaving bosom. Hogan was already there, looking somewhat like an undertaker.

"I wonder what's keeping Father Tim," remarked Mrs. Rooney, after they had all exchanged self-conscious greetings. She did seem a little nervous in spite of the smile.

"Poor Father Tim," she continued, "maybe it's a sick call he do be having. Well, this is not the night to be mourning, now is it, Mr. Hogan?"

"It'll be a night of nights fer the both of youse, I'm thinking," he replied with a sly wink at Reilly.

Mrs. Rooney pretended to blush. "There now, go along with ye. Come here, both of yese—you, Mike, and you, Hogan. While we're waiting fer the priest, we'll wet our lips with what's left of me poor Dan's private stock."

Again a suspicious thought tried to edge its way into the brain of Reilly.

"I'll be waiting," he said, "till after the wedding."

"Indade, and ye'll not, Mike Reilly. It's me health ye'll be drinking this minute if ye love me at all, at all."

She turned to Hogan. "What would Dan say if a man refused a drink at his bar?"

Hogan grinned. "He'd never let him in the door again."

"Hold up yer glass, Mike Reilly, like a man, and let me pour a taste of it out fer ye."

He gazed into the blue eyes.

"Pour it out, then," he said, "before Father Tim comes."

It guggled down into him like water into a rat-hole. Then as before, forty Mrs. Rooneys appeared behind the bar. The forget-me-nots on her bosom rippled like a lake of blue. . . .

When he awoke, he felt the roll of a ship under him. The few sailors that were in the forecastle of that hooker, Arctic bound on a three-year cruise, heard him call: "Ellen, Ellen! Has the priest come yet?"

Then a frozen roar reached down into the forecastle.

"Where's that damned one-eyed harpooner that shipped on this whaler?"

"He's here, sir, calling for a priest!"

THE OLD HOME TOWN

(Continued from page 94)

how dressed up! And Odalea never experienced a greater confusion than came to her when Mrs. Budlong disclosed the purpose of the whole festival—and disclosed it with a little extra perfection of revenge on the niece who had refused her good offices in romance.

The bulk of the younger people laughed openly at Odalea's choice. All the girls had engineers for partners. Odalea had brought the only native son—and the least brilliant social figure of the town.

Hunter Parrish did not laugh. He glowered at Ben and longed to attack him. He had not heard of what Ben did to one other giant who forced him to battle, but Parrish could not start a fight, of course, in such a gathering.

The only person who greeted Ben and Odalea with frank enthusiasm was Ian Craigie. The example of the master of them all sobered the youthful satirists, and gave Ben Webb a certain prestige.

At Craigie's side stood the queenliest woman in the house. Ian Craigie seized Ben's hand and murmured:

"My wife arrived today!"

His eyes told how much that meant to him. He presented Ben and Odalea to her as if he did them a great honor and gave his wife a great pleasure.

While Odalea and Mrs. Craigie exchanged vague compliments, Craigie mumbled to Ben:

"You won her at last! I'm mighty glad! I'm mighty glad!"

BEN tried to say that he had as yet won only the privilege of fetching Odalea to a place where he felt more ill at ease than anywhere else on earth, but the music of the dance began, and Ben was afraid to ask Odalea to dance with him.

Nobody else quite dared break the religious law that a girl danced first with her escort, and Ben and Odalea stood watching the crowd, meeting the circling parade of sarcastic taunting eyes with the smile of contented obliviousness to ridicule.

Odalea felt that she must seek out her hostess and pay her respects, but Mrs. Budlong had vanished at her entrance. This was a bit ominous, and Odalea wondered what was in the wind. She learned soon enough; for when the dance ended, Mrs. Budlong prevented the band from playing the usual encores, and stepping to the platform in front of the instruments, called for silence and clapped her hands for attention.

When the crowd had drawn up in a thick huddle before her, she said:

"And now, my dears, I have a little surprise for you—a bit of good news that makes me very happy and means the happiness of one who—of two who—are—is—very dear to me."

She clapped her hands again and turned to the dining-room door. The portiere there had been let down, and now it was thrown back dramatically with a clack of rings.

Out stepped Beulah Cinnamon, very red in face, neck and well down into her chest. She carried a handbag, and wore a hat.

Mrs. Budlong, with the impressive accent of a bad actress ill-rehearsed in uninspired and half-remembered lines, said:

"Why, Beulah, you look as if you were going away on a honeymoon."

The audience laughed at this with a premature indelicacy that upset the show. Mrs. Budlong quelled the noise and motioned the strangling Beulah to say her lines. She managed it with all awkwardness:

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This brought loud applause, and a fellow in front of Odalea whispered to the girl whose arm he was pinching:

"She landed him at last!"

Odalea felt immense relief. Tom Merrick could be counted out of her list of future hazards.

Mrs. Budlong hushed the crowd again and declaimed:

"I'm sure that everyone here wishes you all felicity in your—er—your—I'm sure everybody does! But why do you carry the bag? Are you leaving us at once?"

"Oh, no!" said Beulah, like a chit speaking her first piece in school. "I am not entering upon my new life for some weeks, but I carry the bag because—because there is a cat in it!"

"A cat in a bag? How strange! And what do you intend to do with the cat?"

"I intend to let the cat out of the bag."

A traveling bag is a hard thing to open with grace at best, and the graceless Beulah made so bad a job of it that the graceful feline within was disgusted and had to be lifted out by the scruff of its neck, not without inscribing its front claws in Beulah's forearm, catching its hind claws in the huge bowknot at its breast and kicking all askew a placard fastened there.

It was necessary for Mrs. Budlong to lend her aid, and she finally had to tear the placard from the ribbon and hold it aloft.

People strained to read the inscription and began to repeat it to one another. It passed back from the front line to the rear and reached Odalea last.

"Odalea Lail is engaged to Hunter Parrish."

THIS was murmured over and over in a growing hubbub by the puzzled guests. Odalea was sickened with wrath and dismay. Ben Webb felt as if his mouth had been crammed full of ashes and mud. Hunter Parrish alone experienced a great surge of amazed rapture.

Even Mrs. Budlong's triumph of vengeance and of efficiency was marred by the misbehavior of the *dramatis personae*. She clapped her hands again and cried down the tumult.

"And that's the surprise. We have let the cat out of the bag. And I take the greatest of pleasure—and pride—much pride—in announcing the engagement of my dear, dear niece to that handsome sterling gentleman and scholar, Mr. Hunter Parrish. And I am sure you will all join me in congratulating the happy pair. And I hope the wedding will be celebrated very soon and that my humble home may be the scene of the—of the celebration. And I invite you all now; and—"

But her last words were unheard; for the audience was in a panic of gossip, turning upon itself with questions, seeking for Odalea to congratulate, and mobbing Hunter Parrish with handshakes, slaps on the back and all the ancient riot about the victims of a betrothal.

Ian Craigie was talking fast to his wife, a hopeless outsider helplessly bewildered.

Ben Webb felt as if he had been suddenly shot through a turbine. He knew neither down nor up, nor east nor north. His amazement paralyzed his wrath. His amusement throttled his anguish.

As a well-trained fighter instinctively clutches the hand of the adversary who has just knocked him out, so Ben's hand found Odalea's before his benumbed brain could decide on an action.

His fingers were the first that clutched her trembling hand, and he mumbled:

"Good for you, Ody! He's a nice fellow—finest in the world. I hope you'll be mighty happy—mighty happy. I reckon he'll take you home, so I'll mosey along. Good night! The best o' luck!"

He had to brace himself in the swirling eddy of the guests long enough to say something and say it fast—like a man bleeding at the mouth and desperate to get away and die in peace.

He was too confused to realize that Odalea was clinging to his hand with frenzy and that he had to rip his fingers loose from her clench. He was so busy with his own desire to say what had to be said and take flight that he never noted how hard Odalea was trying to speak or how his own volubility drowned out hers.

He was gone before she could get in a word. He had not looked into her eyes to read them. The hand she put out to check him was snatched by other babblers. Young men and women fought for her and smothered her with stupid phrases and with enthusiasms feigned or real.

People—she could not know or care who—hugged her and kissed her on the nose, the mouth, both ears. She could not recall Ben, nor budge in his pursuit.

But her searching gaze fell upon Hunter Parrish standing up like a high-shouldered rock in a current of bobbing heads. He was radiant with a triumph that stunned her. Did she, then, mean so much to him?

He looked across the surf and called to her with his eyes, fought toward her, laughing and rejoicing. He was checked only by Mrs. Budlong and Mrs. Lail, who slipped through the crowd to congratulate him.

Realizing where his gratitude belonged, he bent and kissed Mrs. Budlong, and gave her a lightning thrill. She turned scarlet and laughed aloud, and struck at him mincingly with an unsuspected coquetry. Then he bent lower and kissed Odalea's mother, who did not laugh, but cried quietly, and threw her arms high about Parrish's neck and clung so tightly that when he stood up he swung her off her feet and she let go with a little cry of fear.

Odalea caught a glimpse of her father buffeted about in the press and trying to drift toward either Parrish or Odalea. He was smiling with the weakness of a whipped-out beggar, and a tear shivered in the corner-pocket of each eye.

IT came to Odalea with a crushing surprise that the mere publishing of her engagement to Hunter Parrish had not only lifted a devoted suitor to the clouds but had given her beaten old parents a delight beyond any gift she had thought within her power.

Her first fiery resolution to deny the engagement sickened at the thought of the consternation and the shame and despair it would inflict on people who, after all, had given her the utmost devotion they were capable of. Even Mrs. Budlong, the conceited old snob, with her pitiful attempts at aristocracy and cleverness and polite mirth, had done the best she knew how.

How could Odalea silence the pack and call her family liars, insult them openly? If her parents had been whipped by life, she too had been tamed into a submissiveness that was craven or saintly according to the point of view.

Feebly she told herself: "Tomorrow I'll set everything right; but just now it would be infamous to turn this festival into an ugly scandal."

So she took the congratulations. She took the kisses of her friends and enemies among the girls, the kisses of her father and mother and her aunt and uncle. She even took the kiss of possession that Hunter Parrish sealed on her cheek. She bowed her head and blushed, and everybody thought that her meekness was beautiful. Nobody suspected that it was pitiful.

When the sensation had been quieted and she could move about, she looked for Ben Webb. What a poisonous, ruthless monster of heartlessness he must think her to ask

him so cordially to take her to Mrs. Budlong's only to subject him to a fearful humiliation! And she couldn't blame him.

How could she ever explain without inflicting an equally atrocious injustice on poor Hunter Parrish, who was evidently as dazed as she. He was behaving like a beggar taken in from the snow—a beggar on whom a whole Christmas tree had fallen. He loved her in his way. She did not like his way; but he loved her, perhaps, as much as Ben loved her.

What was the matter with the world that people could never hit the happy medium? Ben was devoted and too timid; Parrish was devoted and too bold. She liked Parrish, but she loved Ben. It was the aggressiveness of Parrish that taught her finally that Ben was her heart's mate. She had done all she could to tell him so. She had rebuked Parrish for his spurious claims on her, and asked Ben to take her to the very ambush prepared by Mrs. Budlong.

But she would not be hoodwinked out of her happiness. She would repay the trick with another, and she would recall Ben as soon as she decently could. For the present she must avoid a scene at all costs.

So she acted out the rôle forced on her and convinced the authors of it and of her being that she was the most obedient child that ever brought back the good old days. But beneath her dutifulness there was a smile of serene duplicity.

The only spectators who did not beam on her were Ian Craigie and his wife. She had a hint of what Ben was probably feeling from the reproachful eyes of the engineer, though he said only:

"Best wishes! And good night! We must be going!"

There was unutterable perplexity in his look, and the condemnation of a revolted judge, but Mrs. Craigie gazed at her as if she were a peculiarly clammy load.

AS for Ben—he oozed out of the crowd in a mood of never wishing to see another crowd or another woman in all his life. But the driver was waiting, more familiar than ever. With a small-town sense of equality, he said:

"Where's your gal? Aint she comin'?"

Ben could have said many things, but he merely said: "No!"

He rode home in the dark, trying to figure it out with all the logic of a scientific mind that starts wrong and gets farther and farther from the truth the more accurately it reasons. Odalea must have known that the announcement was to be made. Then why hadn't she gone to the party with Hunter Parrish?

Suddenly it came to him that there was something against etiquette, probably, in going to such an affair with the man whose name was to be coupled with hers. That must be it. All the rules of etiquette were Greek to him. Odalea merely used him as a convenience. All her happiness that he had taken to himself was really her happiness in her engagement.

She had loved Parrish so well, that she loved everybody, and Ben had idiotically mistaken her general amiability for a particular love of himself. What a dumb idiot he had been! He would have laughed at any other conceited ass in such a plight, so he laughed at himself. He was chuckling so vigorously that when the car stopped before his door he did not notice it until the driver said:

"What's the joke, Ben? Did you give your gal the slip?"

"Guess again, Jim. How much do I owe you?"

When he was rid of his inquisitor, he turned to enter his own gate, and his hand faltered on the latch. There was his mother still to meet.

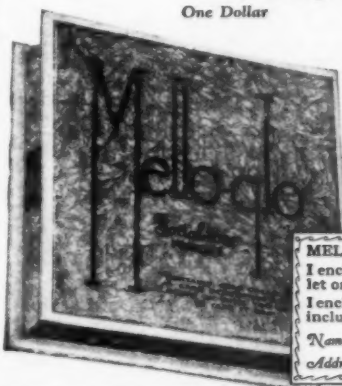
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He paused in a hopeless ambiguity of moods: he did not want to hear his mother rage at Odalea again, and with better excuse than ever; he did not want to humiliate his mother by confessing that the Webbs had been despised and rejected once more; most of all he was afraid of her sympathy.

But he could not stay out there all night, so he went in. His mother started up from evident deeps of slumber, and began to ask questions that showed her resignation to the thought of Ben's marriage with Odalea:

"Well, honey, how'd you and Ody get along?"

"Oh, all right—fine! All right!"

"What happened at the party? Mrs. Budlong pull off any new tricks?"

"Well, she had Beulah Cinnamon let a cat out of a bag."

"Beuly? I declare to goodness! What was it all about?"

"Oh, announcing her engagement to Tom Merrick and Odalea's engagement to—"

"To you? Ben!"

"To Hunter Parrish."

"Ben! Oh, honey! No!"

"Yep. Well, I'll be climbin' up to bed. I got a hard day ahead of me."

"You got a hard life ahead of you! And behind you, too. But you're lucky to escape from the—the I don't know what—of that Lail cat."

"Mamma, if you don't mind, I'd just as lief let that lay over till tomorrow."

"And Hunter Parrish! Humph! He comes right under your own roof to steal your girl."

"Well, as long as he did me a favor according to your ideas, you oughtn't to cherish that against him."

BUT his mother could not endure sarcasm either from him or from the fates. Riddles were torments to her simple mind, and she cried out:

"But I want you to be happy, my baby! That's all I want. And things never seem to come out right. I don't know what's the matter of the world or why the Lord don't take better care of the best boy that ever lived."

His heart rushed out to her, and he tried to medicine her despair with some of her own tonic:

"Maybe He's takin' better care than you realize, honey. I'm all right. I'm gettin' along fine. The children are doin' splendid. And I got you. What more do I want?"

"But a man ain't satisfied just to have an old mother hangin' onto him. Whyn't you leave this old town for a while and strike out for yourself? Why, you never been anywhere but right here. You were born here, and you've stuck here with your poor heart to the grindstone till I'd think it would be mighty near wore through."

"All right, soon's I've finished that little old dam across the little old river, you and I'll go light out for New York and see how Petunia's getting along with her voice, and Guido at his college."

This was such a dream-lit vision that her eyes filled with rainbows in the tears of a longing that had never been near enough to possibility to be a longing.

In the radiance of this hope they were able to forget for the moment the realities that nagged them, and they went up the stairs arm in arm, and parted with many a kiss and a repetition of the old antistrophe.

"Good-night!"

"Good-night, honey!"

They were laughing as they closed their doors. But once inside her cell, the mother sank down heavily, for a twinge of more than spiritual pain tweaked at her overdriven heart and told her that she could never uproot her old self from the soil long

enough for such far travel; she was hardly human any longer, hardly more than a tree.

And Ben dropped on the side of his lonely bed and felt that a journey even to New York would be only an exile from a despair that had grown so familiar as to be a very part of him.

AT the same time, in their room at the hotel, Ian Craigie and his wife were throwing off their clothes in a petulance at life, discussing what they had seen, with a oneness of spirit that revealed their profound comradeship.

To Mrs. Craigie, the scene at Mrs. Budlong's had been only a glimpse of the petty cruelties of small fry who were foreign to her, and she was surprised at the heat of her husband's emotion. He had an engineer's romanticism in love-affairs and wanted them all finished up and perfected in story-book fashion. He burst out:

"I've a good mind to fire Parrish and let him take the girl out of town with him."

Mrs. Craigie had a cleverer solution:

"Why not ship Ben out of town? He's the one that needs the change. You're always sending people to New York on one errand or another. Couldn't you send Ben? Maybe he would meet somebody there that would cure him."

"Lord, but you're a wonderful woman!" said Craigie. "It's the only thing to do, and I'd have thought of everything else. I'll send him tomorrow."

He kissed her, and she smiled indulgently, enjoying the tribute but crediting his love rather than her wisdom with its extravagance. Her smile died as he said:

"And now that you've found a solution for that love-story, put on your thinking cap and find me an answer for the financial tangle I'm in."

"We're in," she amended.

"We're in," he accepted. "I'm pretty close on computations, and as I figure it out, we're not going to have quite enough money to finish the dam, and nobody on earth will lend us the balance."

This was a solemn enough thought to knit her placid brows, and these two lovers sat down together and pored over a book. It was not the romance of Sir Galahad that they read, but the private and secret book of estimates and expenditures that Craigie kept for himself.

They closed the book at daybreak, but the problem was still open.

Since it was almost time for Craigie to be called, he did not go to bed at all, but bathed and clambered wearily into his office clothes. And his wife dressed and went down to breakfast with him.

There was heavy work ahead, for the river was coming to the peak of the flood, and the flood promised to be the greatest in seven years.

Chapter Forty-one

CRAIGIE, at his office, found the usual flood of problems eddying about his desk. Most pressing were the arrangements for meeting the flood. March had come in like a lion and was going out like a mad wolverine.

As a general acts in a huge battle, Craigie made order out of chaos and turned confusion into progress. He instructed the proper lieutenants that the clay parapet of the cofferdams should be smoothed and pounded down. He instructed other lieutenants to procure a vast supply of stone, and others to pass it through the jaws of the stone-crushers, others to have it loaded on dump-cars made up into trains with engines ready, and others to gather the armies of laborers to cart it on wheelbarrows to the imperiled spots and build it into a wall. He instructed

yet other lieutenants to have five thousand sacks collected, packed with sand and piled in other cars for a last emergency.

Then he remembered Ben Webb's case and buzzed for him.

Ben came up to the desk as if he had been sent for by his teacher to receive the decoration of the hot palm. He held out his hand for the ruler, and said:

"Well, what you caught me at now, Professor?"

"Pack your grip for a long journey. There's some machinery to be inspected in New York, and I can't spare a real man just now so you've got to go. It's a kind of machinery that you are less ignorant about than any other. How soon can you get away? This afternoon?"

"New York, eh?" Ben gasped. He could hardly have been more startled than if he had been told to pay a visit to the other New Jerusalem. He fumbled for words:

"Well, this is kind of suddenlike."

"You used to be a plumber, didn't you? Weren't you used to unexpected calls?"

"Yes, I always expected 'em; but nobody in New York ever phoned me the pipes were frozen. But o' course, I'll go if you say the word."

"Transportation and expenses are furnished, of course."

"Well, that makes it easier, but I don't know about my mother. She's not been feeling her best lately."

"Take her along. The trip will do her good."

"Well, that's more like it. I'll go ask her."

He turned to the door and whirled back with a flash of intuition:

"Look here, Mr. Craigie, is this on the level? Are you thinkin' about last night and tryin' to help me out of a hole?"

"This company is not interested in the private affairs of its personnel, Mr. Webb. But it is interested in getting some important machinery inspected, accepted and shipped on."

HE said it so curtly with such a square look in the eye that Ben grinned and answered:

"Now, I know you're lying. You've cooked this all up to save my face and my feelings, and while I appreciate your motives and all that—"

"Will you obey orders and attend to business, or do you want to get fired and have nothing further to do with the dam?"

"Oh, I'll go; but at that—"

"Get out of here. See Simmons for the list of things to inspect. Wire me from New York."

While Ben hesitated, Craigie had put his fingers on the keyboard of his buzzer, telephoned, handed his secretary a heap of signed letters, and told the transportation man whom he had buzzed in, to see that Mr. Webb got reservations and tickets to New York.

Ben went to Simmons and received a statement of his commissions, then went home and frightened his mother by his appearance at such an hour. He stirred her to a frenzy by his story of the New York expedition and his invitation for her to go along.

She too had "never been to Carcassone," and she would rather have visited New York than Paradise, but she shook her head:

"I just aint got the strength, honey. I'd die on the train. But you go. And don't you hurry back. Take your time and see things and—you'll see Petunia there."

"I thought of telegraphing her that we were on our way."

"No, no. Something might happen. You just drop in on her and surprise her—and wire me how the poor child's gettin' along."

When Ben sought Craigie for final instructions, he learned that there was trou-

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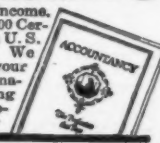
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ble down at the river, and Craigie was as usual at the point of danger.

Ben made haste to the cofferdam and hurried across the wet causeway to where a knot of anxious staff officers conferred.

Already the engines were dragging tons of shattered rock along the riverbank and spilling it thunderously in heaps at the nearest points; swarms of laborers were loading it and scurrying away with it in barrows, which they emptied with a sidewise turn. Then they hurried back for another cargo. Like a double line of ants, a long cable of ants, they went and came while other ants bestowed the ragged stone in an armor-belt.

INTO this hurlyburly Ben pushed and made his way over reeking boards laid down on slimy clay. The wheelbarrow-men and the wall-builders worked in a sidewise rain, for a gale of wind drove the spray from the whitecaps of rising waves that broke about the feet and knees of the men as they crouched and set the stones in place. In a few hours under Craigie's eyes there grew a wall of stone six feet wide and half a mile long.

This battle had an uncanniness, since the danger came not from the north, whence came the unending, incalculable and unceasing pressure of the river, but from the south, whence a hurricane flew and beat back the waters that hastened always south yet never left an empty space. The air, like an invisible river, a contrary river in all-engulfing flood, poured northward while the Mississippi, ugly as mud and hardly more than diluted mud, streamed and bubbled and fermented with growing menace. The river of water and the river of wind fought one another, but like the opposing blades of enormous shears combined their ferocities against the men and the frail partition they dared to attempt in their insolent rearrangement of the world they had not built and could not long annoy.

Craigie was so used to fighting Nature, and turning her own laws against her angry self, that he took his dangers calmly. He was a shopkeeper in his shop, a mechanic at his lathe. When he saw Ben Webb slipping through the mist, he said:

"Aren't you on the train yet?"

"I got plenty of time, Chief, but I'm not so sure now. I came out here to tell you I'd get away this afternoon, but you can't ask me to go away and leave this old river of mine cuttin' up like this in the presence of strangers."

"But this will go on for days, and you could be in New York before the peak of the flood is reached, and the danger has passed—or we have."

"I know, but—well, there's nothin' to see in New York as big as this river and this dam fightin' each other. If the dam wins, the machinery can wait while you repair the damage, and—"

"And if the dam caves in, we wont need the machinery. All right, stick around!"

The gleam in Ben's eye showed how glad he was to be kept on the battlefield, and Craigie was glad to have his help. He needed all the human hands he could recruit; he asked only that Nature withhold her supreme strength and fight him fair and with no miracles.

ALREADY the river had risen far above the height to be expected. It had still farther to go before it climbed to its mark of seven years ago. But no one could tell that it would stop there. It might break the records of twenty years, or a century.

The fury of March was bequeathed to April. To the backward drive of the stream under the fury of the upriver gale succeeded a deluge of icy rain that turned the clay to glue and flowed away, undermining the walls. On a parapet of mucklage that stuck to nothing but the feet and hands

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and faces of the workmen, a night and a day crept by under the innumerable little chisels of the rain chipping at the wall from above. Every drop carried with it some portion of the barricade and added itself to the plethora of the stream. And all the countless black acres of the sky poured down new waters to enlarge the mounting river.

But Craigie's men, indomitable as ants that do not know enough to recognize defeat, and conquer as much by ignorance as courage, kept running back and forth in that human rope on the invisible pulleys, fetching more clay, more stones and weaving the wall higher and higher as the river multiplied its unfatigued recruits.

Again the town of Carthage stood upon its walls and watched the battle for its life. Odalea was in the fretted throng, standing with her father and mother, who would not be compelled to stay indoors, but preferred to shiver beneath their useless umbrellas in their waterlogged wraps and their sodden shoes and see their doom enacted. If the dam went, the city of Carthage went down the stream with it, leaving a perpetual village of thwarted hope.

Odalea was again reduced to the company of her dismal parents, for Hunter Parrish was as busy as the rest of the engineers. After the glimpse of heaven he had been vouchsafed at Mrs. Budlong's, and the short walk home with Odalea and her father and mother (who were too much infatuated with their prospective son-in-law to leave him alone with Odalea—for which she sent up secret thanks to heaven), Parrish had not been able to return to the presence of his betrothed. He telephoned as often as he could find the time. At night he slept near the river, too fagged to climb the hill to his own bed.

Ben Webb did not see him, nor he Ben Webb, for their tasks were separate and their paths did not cross. If they had met, both would have perhaps forgotten that any woman had confounded their old friendship, or that any woman existed. The business in hand was a sexless matter of life and death, bankruptcy or fortune—man's work sheer and simple. But they did not encounter one another.

ODALEA and her parents went home at dark after the second day's vigil had ended in the bliss of nightfall and a mystery of phantoms moving among bobbing torches and the St. Elmo's lights of electric lamps strung here and there. At home they found a soggy evening paper and read with fascination of what they had seen as if to have the nightmare confirmed.

Among the smaller items was a statement based upon a bit of news picked up by a reporter when it was expected to be true:

"Our esteemed fellow-citizen, Benjamin Webb, has been honored by his chief, Mr. Ian Craigie, with an important commission in New York City, N. Y., and departed yesterday afternoon for the metropolis, in which ye scribe imagines he will doubtless visit his talented sister, who is progressing grandly in vocal culture under her teacher, Professor Maestro."

Reading this, Odalea sighed and let the paper fall with her hopes. Her mind went through the very thoughts that Ben had traveled when he reviewed their love and found it only friendship.

She remembered his delight in her, his hasty obedience to her summons, his phrase, "Don't ask me; just tell me," his chivalry and his apparently blissful bewilderment when she praised him. But after all, that meant no more than that he liked her and was pleased with her cordiality. What a fool she had been to think that his natural, his compelled politeness was a proof of love! What did she know of his



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heart, or of his life in his long absences?

And now he had gone to New York, and his inexperienced eyes would feast on hundreds of superb princesses before whose arts and splendors she would shrink to the shabby small town peasant she was. She could not even send him word that she would wait for him. He might never come back; and if he did, he would be another man, a scholar in the postgraduate graces of the big city sirens. She could not even gain the attention of Hunter Parrish long enough to explain to him that he had been betrayed into an alliance with a woman whose heart was dead within her breast.

A storm swept through the halls of her soul; dark waters clashed about her unsteady feet; and in her eyes it began to rain.

Chapter Forty-two

WHEN the gale from the south had worn itself out, and the oceans above the firmament had emptied themselves upon the river and its infinite tributaries, the flood advanced with a remorseless rush that gave the builders of the dam no rest and no encouragement.

There was a special fear in Craigie's mind, for he realized that all further defense was extra. It was not planned or provided for in the emergency allotments of his funds. The outlay in money and material was appalling, and none of it was for construction; it was all for protection. Even if he beat the flood, he would be beaten, for his treasury was bleeding away, and the dam might well be left unfinished, an eyesore and reproach, until the Mississippi had nibbled at it and nagged it away at leisure until nothing remained to show that a dam had ever been attempted there. Then Crazy Craigie's folly would lack even a monument.

Still, he must fight on while it was possible to fight. But the unending maddening elevation of the level, hair's-breadth by hair's-breadth, quarter-inch by quarter-inch, eighth by sixteenth, foot by foot, wore down his patience and his resolution ounce by ounce.

Even the imperturbable Craigie began to go frantic before the eternal lap-lap of the murky ripples, always a little farther up the parapet; the snicker of the wavelets that ran beyond one another a tiny bit and fell back only to come again; the occasional contemptuous smack of a rush of water over the latest stone added to the riprap; the low mumbling yammer of the toothless mile-wide mouth that lipped the wall and spat out:

"Keep right on playing the fool. I'm not at all tired. I've not begun to fight. There's more and more of me a mile upstream, and twenty miles back of that and hundreds of miles in back of beyond. You should see the brooks that are tumbling over themselves to be in at the finish. You know how high I was seven years ago, and twenty years ago. But the Indians wrote down no records of what I did a century ago. And there were no Indians here when I flowed higher than those cliffs behind you made up of fossil multitudes that once lived on my banks. Before man was, I am!"

A week of battle ended in a Saturday night of defeat and a need of a Sabbath's repose. Even God rested on the Seventh Day. And Craigie was drained of courage now; he was ready to welcome the epitaphs of "coward" and "bankrupt" and "failure" as a pleasant exchange for further torture of weariness.

When his wife came out to the middle of the river and pleaded with him not to kill himself utterly, he leaned upon her heavily and bowed his leaden brow:

"All right, honey; I guess I'm about all in."



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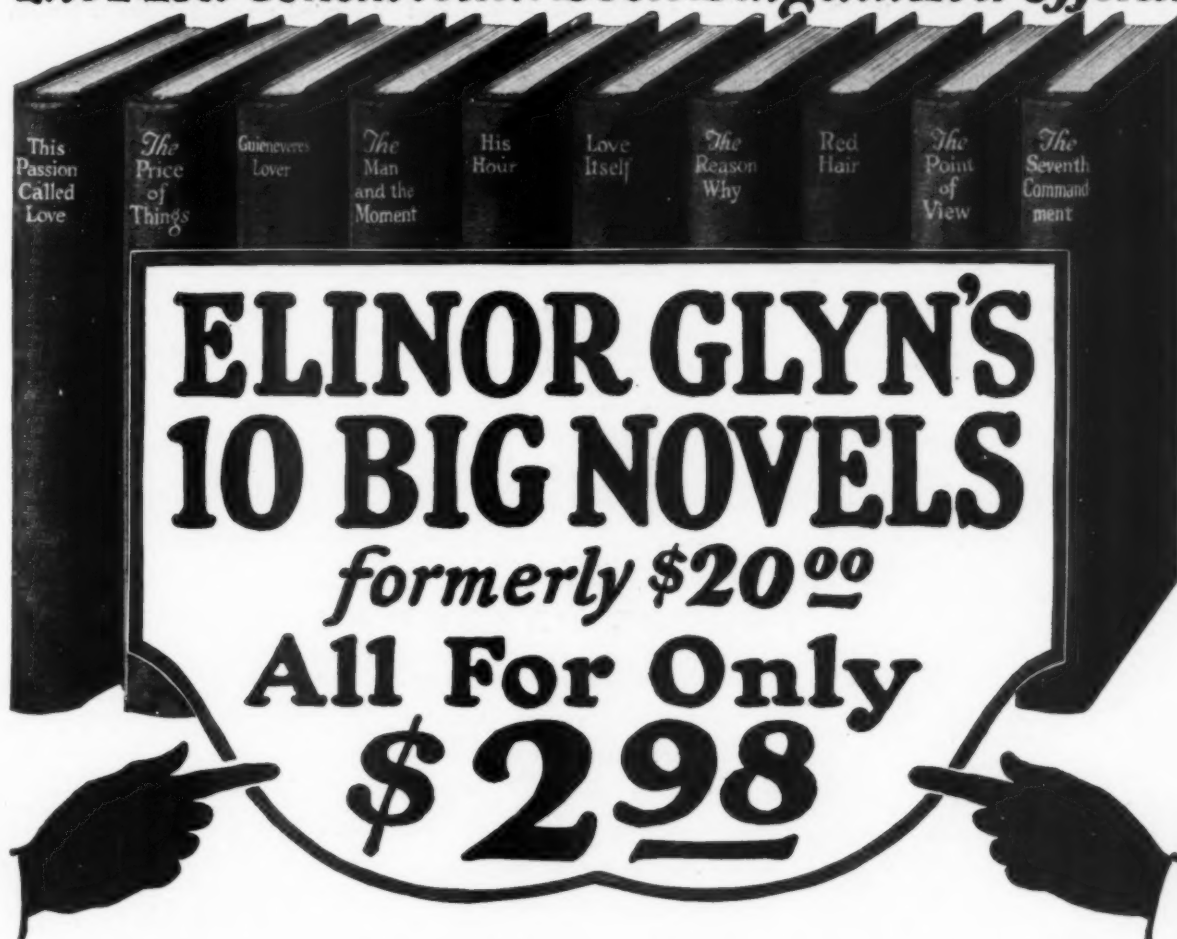
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AND then a cyclone came down from the north, boring its augers of twisted air into the surface of the forever swelling stream and tossing up billows more usual to an ocean than a river.

The spiraling tempest slashed its rawhide thongs about the bodies of the workmen and made them drop to their hands and knees to grip the clay, lest they be flung overboard into the boiling surf below.

And across their very backs the high waves plunged and leaped the wall, landing in the sacred inclosure of the cofferdam, spreading ruin among the foundations and the engines and delicate beginnings of the power-plant.

Craigie was stung to new courage, and refreshed as by a resurrection from death. The grandeur of the attack broke open unknown stores of strength in him and his men.

"The sandbags!" he shouted, and ran toward the shore, lugging his wife with him. As a spent runner about to pitch forward on the ground is suddenly filled with an afflation as if from the gods, Craigie found that miraculous thing so crassly called "the second wind."

He carried his wife along and upheld her as if on wings. At the bank he turned her over to Ben Webb, commanding:

"Get her home safe! Good-by, honey!"

He was gone. Ben Webb ran a little way with her, but stopped short to say:

THESE THINGS WILL HAPPEN

(Continued from page 82)

Nancy. Upon the scales of his judgment they balanced perfectly. Then he realized that all this applied thinking would never get him anywhere. It was necessary that he receive a shock; and he must sit down, twiddle his thumbs and wait for it. He could not go forth and hunt for a shock, and he could not advertise for one; an acquired shock would not serve. He had written his mother upon this subject, but she had evidently given the matter no consideration. He must have a shock thrust upon him, swiftly, unexpectedly.

THE shock came, in the strangest, weirdest way that ever befell a man. One night he entered his room in the dark, only to stumble over something, a bulky something on the floor. Confusedly he turned on the light, and to his horror beheld a handsome young woman. Stunned, he stared at her, not knowing what to do, whether she was dead or in a faint. Her face was absolutely unknown to him. If a guest, she had arrived that night.

Getting some breath back into his lungs, he rolled the woman over gently. She sighed. Then he shook her. She twisted out of his hands, limply, as half-conscious persons often do.

He stood up. What the devil should he do? He could not call the manager. That would compromise the woman, compromise himself. A unique notion entered his head. He would return to the terrace and give the woman time to recover and to recognize her mistake. But once on the terrace, he became frightened. Supposing it was a heart-attack and she died? He literally tore his hair. He forgot Nancy, Dora, Ann; there was nobody in the world but this strange beautiful woman lying on the floor of his bedroom!

He paced the terrace for half an hour, then returned to his room. The woman was gone, but not the thrilling impression of her. He locked his door and stepped out upon the little iron balcony and went to sleep—or what might be called sleep—on the chaise longue. He ordered his breakfast there. Contentedly. He now knew what had happened. He had fallen asleep and had dreamed about the woman, though it was a

"Excuse me, ma'am, but I know you'd rather I looked after your husband. —Hey, you!"

He seized a running shadow of immense bulk and said:

"Say, this is Mrs. Craigie. The chief says for you to get her home safe. Understand? That's orders!"

He was gone before he knew that it was Hunter Parrish whom he had so rudely detained. Parrish carried Mrs. Craigie a little way, looking back longingly to the new battle that was commencing with no fanfare of trumpets.

Mrs. Craigie took mercy on him and said: "Don't mind me. I see a number of women there. I'll get home all right. Run along! That's orders!"

Parrish laughed: "Thank you!"

And he was gone. Mrs. Craigie stumbled to a shed in whose lee huddled a few women to be near at the final crumbling of the dam.

Among them she found Odalea Lail, the wind whipping her cloak about her, and her eyes smoldering with anguish in the light of a lantern which the wind banged against the shed and threatened to blow out or shatter every moment.

(The conclusion of this, the most impressive of all Mr. Hughes' novels, is memorable indeed. Watch for it in the next, the June, issue.)

persistent dream, more vivid than it should have been.

He went into the dining-room that noon, his heart affected oddly. The dream woman was not among the diners. Then he became positive that it was a dream, and spent the afternoon at work.

At tea-time, whom should he see coming toward him but his mother! He flew to her.

"When did you come?" he cried delightedly, recognizing that for all these weeks he had been the loneliest man on earth.

"Thought I'd surprise you. I've been at Cadenabbia, and only yesterday did the news come that you were here. My son, you look very well." She looked into his eyes, her hands upon his shoulders. She smiled.

"Why didn't you wire? The Villa is full up."

"So I learned. So I engaged a room at the Grand, down in the village."

"You're as beautiful as ever."

"Your compliments are always welcome to your mother."

"Cup of tea?"

"Certainly. But you must come down and dine with me tonight. I have a charming girl and her mother I wish you to meet."

"Mother, I'm darned tired of charming girls," he growled.

"What's become of the actress, Ann Sterling, you wrote about? I thought she was excited over your new play."

"So did I; but I haven't had a line from her since."

"Did she appeal to you?"

"Only in a literary way," he evaded.

"Oh. Everything is lovely at home. Nancy and Dora both wanted to know what took you off so suddenly. Ronny, do you still love them both?"

"Mother, I don't believe I love either of them." He thought of the strange beauty who had so oddly invaded his room. "Work and travel have kind of ironed me out," he lied.

And she could tell by his eye that he was lying. She smiled inwardly. "You see? I knew travel would help you out of that muddle."

"Anyhow, I've finished a play," he said.

She remained till six, asking him adroit questions, worming little facts out of him as only women can, but she failed to find what she sought. She waited for him to dress, and together they went down to the Grand Hotel for dinner—where he was introduced to the young woman he had found upon his bedroom floor!

SMOKE. The founching-room became suddenly filled with it. The vapor surrounded him as he entered the dining-room. It hovered over his plate so that he had only half a notion of what he was eating. The girl he had found insensible in his room!

There was no recognition in the lovely eyes. Her name was Pola Walewski, and he knew instantly by the name that she was the great pianist. Beautiful, too. But what the devil had she been doing in his room? Perhaps she had been trying to find some other door, had fainted, and fallen into his room. Any way he theorized, he found himself a nervous wreck by the time the dinner was over.

Pola's mother was gayly talkative, and among other things remarked that her daughter was subject to fainting spells, due to overwork, her tremendous labor at the piano. Some night she would play for Mr. Wynn's especial pleasure.

So it appeared to Ronny that Pola had been seeking some one else, had had one of her attacks, and had fallen through the door, which at the Villa he never locked. He was vastly relieved.

A day or so later he took his mother to one of the lake villages, and found Pola playing a furiously accurate tennis game. Evidently there would be no fainting spell today. He was puzzled. Girls subject to fainting spells never played tennis as Pola played. Of course there might be days when she was normal.

Pola interested him, as all vigorous women interested him, women with out-of-doors proclivities. He was anxious to hear her play, for she was considered one of the best Chopin players on the concert stage. There was a smart recklessness about her—artistic temperament, probably. He knew something about that himself.

That night his mother eyed her letter-of-credit thoughtfully.

The following day he was scribbling on the terrace when a waiter approached and announced that there was a lady in the reception-room who wished to see him. Instantly his thought jumped to Pola. She had come up to play for him.

The sun poured into the reception-room, and the woman entered the beam as she rose to meet Ronny. There were copper lights in her brown hair and eyes. Ann Sterling! Her first words were mere sounds, of which he could make nothing.

"Dick!" she cried.

A handsome man in the early forties came out of the adjoining parlor.

"Dick, this is Ronald Wynn, whose play I told you about. —Mr. Wallace, my husband."

Ronny grasped the man's hand as daintily as he would have grasped the claw of a live lobster. For a space he did not know who or where he was. Then suddenly there came to him the sensation of immense relief. Ann Sterling had been removed; she was no longer mixed with Dora or Nancy.

"Have you finished that play?" Ann inquired.

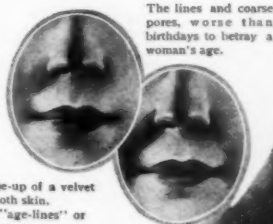
"Yes."

"Mr. Wallace and I are at Lugano. We ran over for the day. Mr. Horkheimer cabled that if I liked the piece he would produce it this autumn."

That struck some bell in Ronny's befuddled brain, and he awoke to the fact that opportunity was banging on his door.

He got the finished script, and Ann Sterling read it on the terrace—and accepted it! When she was done with the reading, the

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dramatist wiped the sweat from his forehead; the sweat from surprise had not dried yet! She was married, and she had almost taken a place alongside Nancy and Dora! Well, well, he thought; love comes once to every man, but a theatrical star comes to a dramatist but once in a hundred chances.

The remarkable afternoon wasn't over yet, not by any means. No sooner were Ann Sterling and her husband gone, than up came Pola Walewski to play for him. Look at her as he would, he could not shut out his first picture of her. Of course it was all a mistake. She hadn't seen him; he was positive of that.

She was the handsomest redhead he had ever seen. She was fascinating, spoke five languages and was full of wit. She was all in white, her lips and hair and eyes the only color.

"I have come up to play for you," she said. "The mood is on me; and when that comes, I must play. And my pleasure is doubled if I play to some one who loves music. Come, for an hour. Chopin, if you like."

He was naturally thrilled. Here was one of the greatest living pianists, offering him her genius impulsively. She was going to play Chopin because it was her mood. In other words, he was to hear her intimately at her best, perhaps play as she played one recital in a hundred, inspiredly.

He sat down a little way from her, so that she might sense his presence and yet not be disturbed by it. Never again would any piano speak to him as that one did. All his life he knew that he would remember Pola Walewski tenderly. And yet through it all he saw sketches of Dora and Nancy. He saw them both at the piano, their attitudes strikingly unlike yet equally beautiful.

Suddenly Pola put a hand to her eyes, swayed and would have fallen if he had not caught her. In his arms! The sheer loveliness of her, the subtle perfume of her hair which was close to his lips! He carried her, affrightedly, to the lounge and laid her down; and no sooner had he done so, than she sat up, smiling.

"Why didn't you kiss me?" she asked.

"Why? . . . What? . . . Kiss you?"

"Opportunity is everything."

"I love another," he replied.

"What's a kiss, even if you do?"

He made a gesture. "It would have been easy."

"You don't like me?"

"I don't love you. What's your game?"

Pola laughed. "Yes, you're in love. For few men could have resisted me a moment gone. Your mother told me: you love two women and can't tell which you love the more. Had you kissed me, poor boy, your conscience might have told you which."

"Very good," he said. And before she could avoid him, he had kissed her. He laughed. "By the Lord Harry, what a notion! Now, if you'll excuse me, I'll go and find a lonely place and await the fermentation of my conscience. I have one."

He bowed, turned on his heel and left the parlor, a rollicking burst of laughter following him.

"Well?" said Mrs. Wynn.

"He kissed me. . . . But wait: only after I told him his conscience would tell him which girl he loved."

"Where did he go?"

"Somewhere to permit his conscience to ferment, so he said. A playwright? He will get on. But whether we've succeeded in shocking him or not, that remains to be seen. And now, dear lady, don't bother about the check. I have been greatly amused, and that is always worth more than money. And I'll tell you this: he kisses perfectly, and will make one or the other a fine lover." Pola laughed. "If you could have seen him when he turned on the lights in his room! Do I look like a woman

who would inspire horror in a young man? Oh, it is so funny!"

"I had to use desperate remedies," said Mrs. Wynn pathetically. "And the game isn't all played yet."

"How clever you must have been when you were young!" cried the musician. "And how adorable!"

"I was no cleverer than any girl of my age. I grew clever—if you want it that way—with the years."

"But this actress?"

"Oh, she was glad enough for a free trip to Paris. Besides, she honestly liked his play."

"Why don't you write one?" asked Pola.

"Drama interests me only visibly. My son is a good, clean boy; but his brain became strangely addled by something which hypnotized him into the belief that he loved two women alike. And that's nonsense."

"Utter nonsense. What would you have said if he had kissed me when I pretended to faint?"

"Nothing. But I should have known that he actually loved no woman."

Pola took her in her arms and kissed her. "Good luck!"

Mrs. Wynn sighed.

FOR a long time Ronny waited upon his conscience, which, however, refused to bite deeply enough. Then a wonderful plan came to him. He would cable both girls that he was hanging between life and death, and sign his mother's name to the cables. The replies would settle definitely which girl cared the more, and that would be the girl for him. He was highly elated with this notion, and at dinner related it to his mother, who knocked over her glass of water.

"Wait for a few days, Ronny."

"All right. Anyhow, we've sold a play to Ann Sterling. The gods aren't wholly absent from our party."

He did not notice, during the meal, his mother's nervousness. After coffee she declared her intention of returning to her hotel. He wanted to accompany her, but she would not hear of it.

"No need at all of your climbing down and back. Smoke and enjoy yourself. I insist. Tomorrow they will have a room here for me. *Dormi bene.*"

As a matter of fact, he wanted to be alone. He had kissed Pola Walewski, and somehow he couldn't crush out the picture; nor would his conscience goad him. He knew that he could never love a woman of her sort—who would challenge a man to kiss her. But how she would dramatize! The devilry of Lola and the genius of a Chopin. Dangerous. Had he kissed her to test his conscience, or had he kissed her because he couldn't help it? What a queer type of a dub he was! On the stage he would be unbelievable. Who had ever heard of a man loving two women with identically the same kind of love? Well, those cables would finish the muddle. The one who answered it the better. But supposing neither cared for him in that way? Something from the back of his head, something that had come down from the garret to startle the guests in the parlor! Or was he a human butterfly, to flit hither and yon without will?

There was actually nothing wrong with him mentally, or Ann Sterling would not have accepted his play.

All right. Tomorrow he would send the forged cables. Even if both girls gave him the go-by, he would be far better off than he was at present, 'twixt the devil and the deep blue sea. He certainly couldn't ask his mother to go prying to see which girl . . . Lord, Lord, what a moron he was!

He resolutely turned his attention to the night—while his mother watched him from beneath the magnolia tree. Truly a night for love-making. Along the shores of both

lakes villa lights twinkled, and the rowboats with swinging lanterns moved about upon the still, dark water or melted palely in the moon-path. On the Lecco side was the granite profile of Napoleon, now gentled by the exquisite moonshine. Near by the great oak, lightly touched by the night wind, rippled with points of silver.

This oak, so he had been told, was four hundred years old. The thousand light dramas that had fluttered there for a while and gone from under! His father and mother had loved beneath it. To her the spot was magical and sacred, and tonight he knew why. How lonely he was! What an infernal ass, too, not to know his own mind regarding the most important episode in his life! Nancy or Dora—he did not know which!

A HAND fell lightly on his shoulder. Thinking memories had brought back his mother, he laid his cheek against the hand—to find it young, giving forth the perfume of freshly plucked roses. Pola Walewski! He jumped to his feet, agreeable to any adventure that might befall him. He was rather desperate.

But the woman he faced was not Pola. Heaven sent him wisdom in that moment. Everything he must do was clearly defined. Careless that his iron chair toppled to the cobbled path, making a sound like broken bells, he took the young woman into his arms and kissed her, then remained silently embraced with her.

"Ronny, Ronny, you really love me?"

"Always, ever since I was a boy." And he knew it to be the truth.

"If you hadn't kissed me—"

He kissed her again.

"—I should have died of shame. Your mother cabled me that you were desperately ill and would I come. Why didn't you tell me? Why did you run away?"

"Because I had to go through a mental hell first."

"You mean—you didn't know?"

"I was afraid you didn't care." He felt the thinness of the ice upon which he had been suddenly thrust.

"You might have tried to find out."

"I have."

"And you were ill?" Women must know everything at this stage.

"In my head. I'm all right now. What a glorious night!" He gestured toward the moon, wisely. No woman can resist moon-shine after having been kissed by the man she loves. "Will you marry me tomorrow?"

"I suppose I must, now." The young woman laughed. She was wildly happy.

"And you came across half the world because Mother cabled I was ill?"

"Rather because I loved you—and didn't know it till that cablegram arrived."

So she had had her muddle too? He laughed. That mother of his, the old darling!

"What makes you laugh?"

"Life," he answered.

From behind the magnolia tree his mother emerged for a moment, then silently took the path down to the village. This once, but never again would she meddle. She knew all about life. Dora or Nancy, it did not matter. Propinquity was the thing.

"Come and play the nocturne for me," said Ronny, distressed for the wonder that was in him regarding the Other Girl. She hadn't answered the cablegram, evidently.

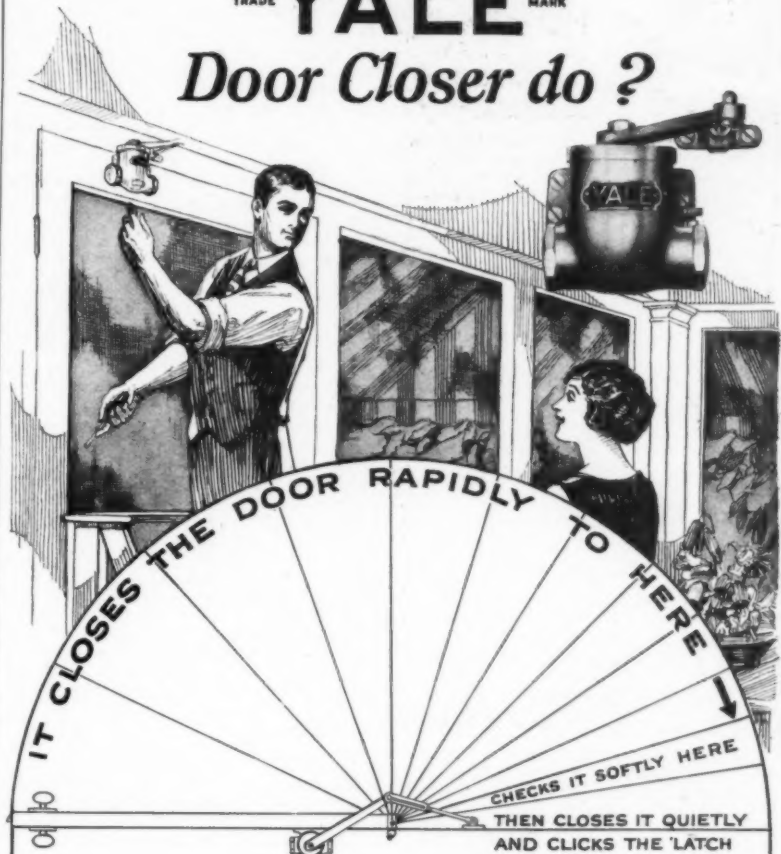
"Isn't it too late?" asked the Girl. "Do you suppose anyone has seen us?"

"Who cares?"

"All right: the nocturne. But my fingers won't be certain."

And as she played Chopin, he knew that he loved her with all his heart, but also knew that he would wonder till the end of his days what would have happened had Dora appeared instead!

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T I D E S

(Continued from page 73)

Of course that was due partly to the fact that Alan had been working so hard. By tutoring during the summer he had got into Northwestern University a year ahead of his class at Hyde Park High School, and as the trip from Oakland to Evanston took nearly two hours, he lived part of the time at a fraternity house out there, coming home only two nights a week. Besides, he was taking extra courses to fit himself for business, so he didn't go out as a rule except on Saturday nights, when usually he took Leta somewhere.

But not tonight. Leta had a part in the dramatics and had to be at the club an hour ahead of time, so Alan would be free, and Blanche felt sure he wouldn't mind taking her. In fact, when she last saw him, a week ago, he had spoken of old times, and said he wished they met more frequently.

If, in the circumstances, Alan should take her, Blanche didn't think Leta would mind. Plainly Leta was very fond of Alan, but she wasn't of a jealous disposition, and she knew—so Blanche felt—that she and Alan were merely childhood friends.

Leta's mother might not like it, though. She was absurdly jealous for her daughter and sometimes showed it plainly. You could always tell what Mrs. Purnell was thinking, because she always talked about it. Lately she had talked of Alan almost as much as she talked of Leta, and she always spoke of him with a proprietary air, telling with a kind of boastfulness how ambitious he was, and prophesying that he would make a big success in business. Blanche wondered if Alan would some day marry Leta. They were awfully young to be thinking of anything like that. She and Leta were the same age—eighteen—and Alan was only a year older; but Ray, who was twenty-one and was terribly clever at seeing through things, insisted that Mrs. Purnell had such a match in mind. He was always poking fun at the Purnells. At Alan too, for that matter, and at almost everybody else. Blanche often wished he would be more considerate of people's feelings. She wished he wouldn't call Alan "Old Soberides" and that he wouldn't burlesque Leta's recitations. She was sure they didn't like it.

HAD Ray been less critical, she might have seen more of Alan in the last two years. When Ray first moved into the neighborhood, the two boys had seemed to be congenial, but without any definite break they had soon drifted apart, and in that drift she had somehow been involved. That was really the beginning of it, she saw, as she looked back. From the time of Ray's arrival her relations with Alan had begun to alter.

The fact that Ray was two years older than Alan made him feel superior, she supposed, and his having inherited money from his father's Spanish relatives no doubt made a difference too. You could see that he felt very independent now that the money was in his hands. Blanche had tried to get him to stop lordling it over Alan, but Ray had only laughed at her and said it would do Alan good to be kept in his place—that he mustn't be allowed to think too well of himself just because he was going to the university now.

It was hard to manage Ray when he got a notion like that. He was so headstrong, so determined. Almost invariably he had his own way. It hadn't taken him long, after he moved into the neighborhood, so to rearrange things that he, instead of Alan, was escorting her to parties. Almost before she knew it, the change had been effected, and Alan was taking Leta instead. Again she found herself wondering how much Alan cared for Leta. Was he falling in love with her?

Love! How could people know if they were in love? Did they realize it the same as they realized they were hungry or thirsty? How did it affect them? Did they just keep thinking of the one they were in love with, wanting to see him, wanting to hear from him?

She went to her table, took from the drawer the note she had written Ray, and read it over. It struck her as stiff and formal, so she rewrote it. Somehow it was harder to write to Ray than to other people; he was so clever that you were always a little afraid of what he might think. She wasn't sure that her second letter was an improvement on the first. How she wished she had sent the first one right away! Because now her letter wouldn't reach him until Monday morning.

That night she had difficulty in getting to sleep, and at dawn she suddenly woke, possessed by the idea that she had heard Ray calling her. So strong was the illusion that she had an impulse to get up and look out of the open window whence the voice had seemed to come, but she dissuaded herself. What foolishness! Of course he couldn't possibly be out there at such an hour. She had been dreaming.

Nevertheless she could not get back to sleep. Until broad daylight came, she lay revolving in her mind ideas for improving the letter, but by the time she had risen and dressed, they were discarded, and after breakfast she walked down to the post office and dropped the missive into the brass-rimmed slot.

Well, it was gone. Perhaps it wasn't right, but it was gone.

In the afternoon she went for a walk, but though the day was springlike, she soon returned, and ascending to her room, sat down with a book. Thoughts of Ray kept coming between her and the pages. When would she see him again? Would the letter make things right? That night, as on the night before, she was for a long time sleepless, and her first thought next morning was that today he would receive her letter.

What would he do? Would he telephone before she went to school? She delayed as long as possible, but no message came, so she put on her hat and coat and hastened out into the mild spring air.

Unlike the other residences of the Shire block, that of the owner was entered from the side street, and the avenue upon which it faced was not visible from the door. Moving down the steps, Blanche heard the sound of hammering, and as she rounded the corner, she was startled to discover signs of unwonted activity at a point that seemed to be directly in front of her father's house. Near the curb carpenters were erecting a rough shed, and workmen were tossing planks out of a wagon.

WHAT could it mean? As she hurried forward, a second work-wagon lumbered up, and turning, drove over the curb, over the sidewalk, and into the front yard.

They had torn down the iron fence! Half of it was gone! The soft earth of the side yard was rutted with wheel-tracks. They were digging—digging up her mother's garden!

Near the shed a workman was slamming the planks into a pile.

"What's this digging for?" she demanded of him breathlessly.

"Flats," he replied without looking at her. She gasped.

"Why, you can't do that!"

The workman straightened up, drew from his pocket a sulphur match, struck it on the leg of his overalls, and having shielded it with his hands until the blue flame disappeared, relighted his corn-cob pipe. Ap-

parently the pipe was clogged. He pulled at it, tamped the burning tobacco with a leathery thumb, spat, and looked at her gravely, saying: "I'm just the foreman."

"Well, it's all a mistake! My father's away. Who told you to do it?"

He mentioned a name she had never heard.

"It's a mistake!" she repeated vehemently. "You must stop until I find out about it!" Turning, she ran to the Wheelock house.

AS the front door was on the latch, she entered the hall, and hearing voices, advanced swiftly into the library, where she found Zenas Wheelock, Harris and Martha.

"Oh, Grandpa Wheelock!" she cried. "Have you seen what they're doing?"

The old man, pacing the floor, turned toward her.

"Yes, my dear."

"Oh, make them stop!"

"I wish I could."

"But it's a mistake! I told the man it was a mistake. I told him to stop. Maybe he won't stop for me, but he will for you!" She advanced and seized his arm. "Come! Tell him!"

Zenas Wheelock patted her shoulder and Martha spoke.

"I'm afraid it's not a mistake, dear," she said.

"But Aunt Martha—it *must* be! The man says it's a flat-building. Father couldn't do such a thing! He *couldn't*!"

There was a moment's silence.

"I understand," said the old man, "that your father has had financial reverses."

"Did he tell you he was going to do it?"

"No."

"He didn't tell me, either. I don't believe he knows a thing about it! Why, they've torn out Mother's rose-bushes! And the only reason you sold the land was so she could have a garden. She told me so."

"Evidently," he replied, "your father has forgotten."

"Remind him, then! Remind him!"

"Unfortunately our agreement was not in writing," answered Zenas Wheelock. "You mustn't disturb yourself, my dear, for there is nothing you can do."

"Yes," added Martha in a soothing tone, "if I were you, dear, I would just go to school and try not to think about it. We know how you must feel, but I'm afraid it's just one of those things that can't be helped. We must accept it the best we can."

Blanche's eyes suddenly filled. Through the blur of tears she saw Martha set her work-basket on the table, rise and come quickly toward her.

"You know how much we all love you, Blanche. This doesn't make the least difference about that," she said, embracing her.

"I know, but—but I must try to stop it!" Blanche had been trying to keep herself in hand, but this tenderness was more than she could bear. Instead of making things easier for the Wheelocks, she was making them harder—making them worry about her in addition to their other worries. If she remained here she would break down, and that would upset them more than ever. She threw her arms about Miss Martha, clung to her for an instant, and turning, rushed from the house.

Next door the men had taken the horses from the wagons and hitched them to scrapers. The drivers were shouting at the animals and as Blanche passed out of the Wheelocks' gate, she was startled by the sharp crack of a whip. She must hurry! Formulating in her mind a message to her father, she sped with swift steps toward the Corners.

At the telegraph office she wrote the dispatch, and after learning from the clerk that at best she must wait two hours for a reply, she started back. Drawing near the house, she observed Mrs. Shire's victoria standing

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at the carriage-block, and as she mounted the steps, that lady emerged from the door. "Why aren't you in school?" she demanded.

Blanche started to explain, but the other quickly understood and cut her off.

"Well," she said impatiently, "what if they are going to build flats? What earthly business is it of yours?"

"I don't believe Father knows about it! He couldn't—"

"Don't be ridiculous!" Mrs. Shire swept magnificently down the steps, and entering the carriage added over her shoulder: "You'd better get to school; that's what you'd better do!"

As the glistening vehicle drove away, Blanche moved into the house. The slow tick of the hall clock seemed to accentuate the silence of the hall, and her footsteps echoed loudly as she crossed the hardwood floor. Having informed Robert that she was awaiting a message, she went to her room and lay down.

Did her father know? They all seemed to think so. She couldn't believe it, though—not yet. The flats would destroy Grandpa Wheelock's lindens and cut off his light. Her father would never have agreed to such a thing!

And the garden!

Always when Blanche summoned to mind the picture of her mother, she saw her among the roses with their green lacquered leaves, and buds of ivory and coral. To visit the garden, even in the neglected state to which it had fallen, gave her invariably a feeling of serenity, a sense of nearness to her mother, whose spirit seemed to hover there like a fragrance. And now the ground was slashed and mangled, the sandy subsoil, scraped up by the scoops, was piled in ragged mounds, and in a heap against the gate communicating with the Wheelocks' yard the upturn rose-bushes lay dying.

No, he would never have allowed it if he knew!

The morning dragged away; in the early afternoon she went again to the telegraph-office, but no answer had come. Perhaps her father had been out when her message arrived. She returned to the house. In the late afternoon she heard Mrs. Shire come in, and at dusk the slam of the front door and a booming voice in the lower hall told her that Mr. Shire had reached home. Presently he called her, and when she went downstairs, she found them both in the parlor.

"I got a wire from Florence this afternoon," he began, "and she tells me—" The cigar he was smoking was evidently cracked, for he paused to lick the unfurled wrapper and press it into place. "She tells me you've been bothering your father about the new building. I'm in complete charge. What is it you want to find out?"

"Does Father know about it?"

Shire grinned and replied with a question.

"Is it your notion that folks go sticking up buildings without the owner of the property knowing?"

"I told you this morning that he knew!" sharply interjected Mrs. Shire.

"Oh, Mr. Shire!" Blanche strove to control her voice. "Wont you please stop it?"

He stood looking at her quizzically.

"You must!" she burst out. "You must!"

"Oh, must I?" He was smiling.

"Yes, on account of Grandpa Wheelock!"

"So the Wheelocks put you up to this?"

Mrs. Shire snapped out.

"No, but Father promised them the land would always be a garden." The words were hardly out of her mouth when Mrs. Shire turned to her husband, insisting:

"See? The Wheelocks *did* put her up to it, William!"

"I tell you they didn't!" Blanche's hands were shaking, and she clasped them behind her back.

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"Were you over there this morning?" asked Shire shrewdly; and upon her assenting, he continued:

"Well, if they didn't put you up to it, where did you get the idea there was some kind of agreement?"

"Mother told me."

"Oh," Shire stepped slowly to the window, dropped his cigar into a jardinière, and for a moment stared at it abstractedly. He was frowning when he turned to her again. "This is a matter of business," he said slowly, "and you'd just better keep out of it! You didn't admit anything to the Wheelocks, did you?" His eyes were fixed intently on her face.

"I told them just what I've told you."

"You did, did you?" He thrust his head forward. "Well, what did they say?"

"They said Father must have forgotten the agreement, and—and—" As she hesitated, Mrs. Shire cut in with:

"She's holding something back!"

"They told me they didn't think I could do anything," Blanche finished.

In a visible expression of relief, Shire's body relaxed; moving to a chair, he sat down, and when again he addressed her, it was in a milder tone.

"If you haven't done any harm so far," he announced, "it's just bull-headed luck, that's all it is. Let me tell you, people can get themselves into a peck of trouble blabbing about what isn't any of their business."

"But it is my business!" she cried.

"Grandpa Wheelock trusted Father, and for Father to turn around and do a thing like this,"—she groped for the word,—"it's disgraceful!"

Mrs. Shire raised her hands and let them fall upon the arms of her chair in a gesture of limp horror.

"Disgraceful?" she repeated. "A fine word for you to be using! The disgraceful thing is for you to talk that way about your father—and about Mr. Shire too, when this very minute you're indebted to him for the roof over your head! Goodness knows you wouldn't be here if your father hadn't practically insisted on our taking you!"

Suddenly Blanche understood. She had been groping in darkness, but Mrs. Shire had turned on the light. It was true! Her father had planned it—that was why he had obliged her to come here! Of course he couldn't send her to the Wheelocks when he was going to do a thing like that!

But the Wheelocks still loved her, and so she could leave the Shires and go to them. At the thought her spirits soared, but only momentarily, for almost at once she realized that she could not possibly go to the Wheelocks' now. How could she bear to look out from their house on the desecrated garden, with the walls of the flat-building rising, rising, day by day, to darken Grandpa Wheelock's windows and cast a shadow over his life? Her father's action had cut her off from that refuge and made her a prisoner here. Not until now had she fully realized the helplessness of her position; and as the sense of it swept over her, she turned and, weeping, hurried from the room.

Chapter Eighteen

LYING on her bed in the dark that evening, Blanche turned the situation over in her mind. She could help neither the Wheelocks nor herself. She had been hammering her head against a stone wall, and her one desire now was to get away. She could no longer bear it here. She could go to work. If she couldn't get a place in an office or a store, she could at least take care of children. Maybe Colonel Burchard would help her to get started, or she could advertise in the papers.

"Young girl, eighteen, would like"—no, "seeks"—they charged by the line. And you

didn't need to put in "young" if you said "girl" and "eighteen"—"seeks position as—as—" It made it rather complicated when you didn't know just what sort of position you were seeking.

Her thoughts were interrupted by Robert knocking at her door with the announcement that Ray was downstairs.

RAY! Under the stress of today's events, worries about Ray had ceased to occupy the foreground of her mind, but now she was again aware of a great eagerness to see him. He must have forgiven her. He wouldn't be here if he hadn't. She could ask his advice. The electric light half blinded her as she switched it on, but soon her eyes became accustomed to it, and having fixed her hair, she hurried down.

As she neared the bottom of the flight, he advanced to meet her, saying: "You're a nice one! Here I've been sick for nearly a week and I never heard a word from you until today." Then as he saw her face: "Why, how tired you look!"

"Let's go for a walk. I want to talk to you."

"Is anything wrong?"

She warned him in a low voice to say no more until they were outside, and having got her hat and coat, rejoined him at the door.

The night into which they stepped was dark, and dampness rising from the ground filled the air with an earthy smell. Rounding the corner, they moved up the block, assailed at intervals by nomadic gusts of wind which after snatching with soft fingers at their coats, would dart away to nocturnal hiding-places, like children enticing to pursuit.

"What's the matter, Blanche?"

"Oh, everything!"

"No," he said, "not everything, for we're together again. You can't imagine how I've missed you!"

"Have you? I thought you were angry with me for being so stupid."

"Don't call yourself stupid; you're anything but that."

"But you were angry—I know you were."

"Well, that's long ago," he evaded, "and as I told you, I wasn't well."

"I'm awfully sorry."

Discerning in the dimness the outlines of the shed in front of her father's house, she cut obliquely over the grass-plot, saying: "Let's cross the street." She wasn't ready to talk yet; she wanted to sit down with him quietly before beginning, and with a fear that, dark as it was, he might notice the shed and ask questions, she engaged him with another topic.

"What about your poem? Did Mr. Bosworth like it?"

"Oh—that." Ray spoke as one who recalls with difficulty an insignificant affair of long ago. "To tell the truth, I'm rather disappointed in Bosworth; he isn't nearly as artistic as I thought him at first. However, he's a kind soul. He says Chicago's no place for a writer, and he's offered me letters of introduction to prominent literary people—Frank R. Stockton, Archibald Claverling Gunter, F. Marion Crawford and such. Crawford lives mostly in Italy, but I hope it won't be too long before I get over there again, and it will be rather nice to meet the man who wrote 'Saracinesca' and 'A Cigarette Maker's Romance.'"

"Wonderful!"

"Men like that can help a fellow, too," he went on. "You mark my words, once I get back East again, it won't be long before I begin to make a reputation."

"I'm sure it won't."

With an impulsive movement he locked his arm in hers, saying:

"It's lovely to hear you say that!"

At the corner they turned toward the lake, and when they reached the stone wall at the foot of the street, Ray lifted her to a seat on the cap and swung himself up beside her.



ANN PENNINGTON, famous as a *Follies'* star
and dance exponent



EVELYN LAW, Broadway musical
comedy star



FAMOUS FEET

..how they're kept free from corns

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So writes the man who has directed such famous stars as Ann Pennington and Evelyn Law.

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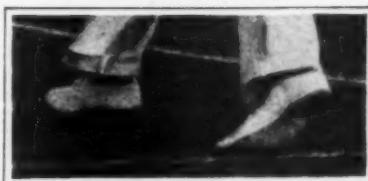
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May 1926



In the darkness the railroad was invisible, but its path along the curving shore was traced in signal lights, ruby, emerald and topaz: a jeweled border at the hem of a black-velvet robe; for tonight this lake of many moods was coy and mysterious, a fair masquerader in a sable domino, unseen, yet betrayed at each stealthy step by the *frou-frou* of her silken skirts.

A SENSE of relief had begun to creep over Blanche as she left the Shires' house; and now, sitting with Ray in the darkness, lulled by the rhythmical wash of the waves against the breakwater, she felt almost happy. It was lovely just to be there with some one who was kind.

"It's queer," he said, "how you feel the openness of that black space out there, when you can't see it. It's the same on a moonless night in the desert. After all, you can't ever see the bigness of anything that's really big. You have to imagine it."

"I wish I were out there in a boat," she told him.

"Not without me, I hope? I wouldn't let you go without me!" She was silent, and he went on:

"While we're imagining things, let's make them worth while. Our boat will be a galleon—or would you rather have a beautiful white yacht—a steam yacht that can take you anywhere?"

"A galleon," she said.

"Well, then, the hull is all carved and gilded, and the sails are of crimson silk, and there are crimson cushions where you recline, attended by your maidens.

"Of course, I'm the captain. I wear a slashed doublet and a plumed hat, and I regret to say, Blanche, that I suspect we've been pirates at one time or another, because the decks are covered with great iron-bound chests, and they're so full of gold doubloons and priceless gems that the crew can't get the lids down, and strings of diamonds and pearls are dangling out all over the place. So your maidens come and get them and festoon your hair with them; and when they've got you all fixed, I come with a golden flagon and jeweled cup, and I drop to one knee and serve you with rare old Falernian."

"What's Falernian?"

"Never mind; you'll like it! And there's another thing about our voyage that you'll like: the weather's always fine, and our sailors are picked for their voices, so they can sing to us as we cruise along."

Blanche, as she listened, had been gazing in dreamy abstraction at the headlight of an oncoming locomotive, and now with a roar it drew abreast of them. As the engine passed, she caught a rushing picture of the interior of the cab with the fireman bending to the swing of his heavy scoop-shovel, one side of his body lost in coal-black shadow, the other daubed with burning light from the open firebox, whence a hot glare shot upward to the plume of smoke that writhed above the cars, blending with it in a soaring luminosity of gray and rose-color.

The train swept on, and as its thunder diminished to a distant hum, she heard Ray's voice again, but it was no longer the exuberant voice in which he had built up his fanciful image.

"Poor little Blanche!" he said. "Is it the flat building? Is that what's the matter?"

"Why, how did you know?" she exclaimed.

"Heard about it first thing this morning from my grandfather. The whole neighborhood's upset, and I knew right away you'd feel it more than anybody. Poor youngster! I wish there was something I could do to make things easier."

"There was," she told him, "and you've done it. You came to see me, and I hope you've forgiven me."

"Forgive!" he repeated. "As if there was anything you needed to be forgiven for! I'm the one that needs forgiveness. It was



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THERE is a tremendous difference in bobs. Some are wonderfully attractive and becoming, while others, well—which kind is yours?

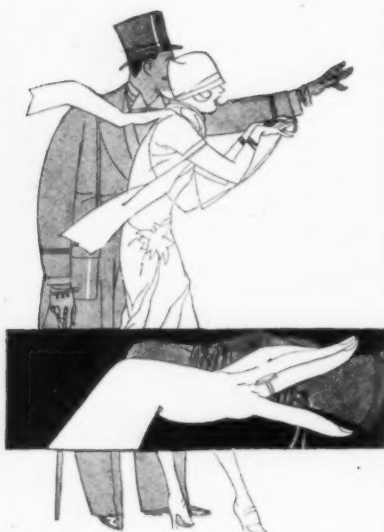
I wish you could picture the becoming kind I have in mind—the sort that makes men turn to admire. I can't tell you what the color is, but it's full of those tiny dancing lights that somehow suggest auburn, yet which are really no more actual color than sunlight. It's only when the head is moved that you catch the auburn suggestion—the fleeting glint of gold.

You have no idea how much your bob can be improved with the "tiny tint" Golden Glint Shampoo will give it. If you want a bob like that I have in mind, buy a package and see for yourself. At all drug stores, or send 25¢ direct to J.W. Koss Co., 6721 Rainier Ave., Seattle, Wn.

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SHAMPOO



"What do you think of those Kelly-Springfields, Joe?"
"To tell you the truth, Ed, I don't think of them at all. They came on the car and they've never been off the rims. Tire trouble is one thing I don't have to worry about."



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beastly of me not to come for you Saturday night! Perfectly beastly! I'm thoroughly ashamed of myself, and I want to confess.

"To tell the truth, I was awfully angry. You see, I hadn't had my coffee when you telephoned, and I didn't more than half know what I was doing; so when I said something to you that I thought was rather nice, and I couldn't get an answer out of you, I decided you must be trying to snub me, and I whipped myself into a perfect lather about it. Unfortunately I do that sometimes. I suppose it's because I have such a devil of an imagination.

"Anyhow, I decided I was never going to see you again. Imagine my being such a fool! I wanted to make you just as miserable as I could, and I hoped I was doing it, but whether I was or not, I was certainly making myself miserable. The family thought I had an attack of la grippe, but that wasn't it. It was just that I was sick over you! I couldn't sleep for thinking of you! I couldn't think of anything else! I kept telling myself I would never speak to you again, yet I felt as if I would go mad unless I could just look at you for a minute.

"Before dawn yesterday morning I felt I couldn't stand it any longer, and so I got up and dressed and went over and stood by that lamp-post on the corner and looked up at your window, longing for you! And I kept thinking you'd come to the window. I knew you must be asleep, but my thoughts were pouring up there in such waves that it seemed as if they couldn't help but wake you! I don't know how long I waited there, but I was angrier than ever when I went home. It was the queerest feeling! I hated you for making me suffer so, yet at the same time I knew I loved you! One minute I'd decide to keep away from you even if it killed me, and the next minute I knew I couldn't—I couldn't wait—I must see you right away!"

She gave a little gasp.

"I did hear you! I woke at dawn, certain I'd heard you speak; and I wanted to go to the window, but it seemed such a crazy notion that I argued myself out of it. I've heard of such things, but I never believed in them before, did you?"

"People can't feel the way I feel about you without communicating it," he answered. "Oh, Blanche, I was standing out there wanting you the way a man dying of thirst wants water!" He seized her hand, bent over and pressed it to his forehead; then, still clinging to the hand, he quickly raised his head, exclaiming:

"Why, you're trembling!"

"I know," she admitted.

"Are you still unhappy?"

"Not this instant, but it will come back."

"Oh, no!"

"Yes, I've such a problem on my hands."

"Tell me." He spoke tenderly.

"I can't stand it any longer at the Shires," she answered. "I've got to get away from there right off."

"You'll go South to your father?"

"Oh, no! I thought I'd look for work."

"Work?" he repeated in a shocked tone.

"Haven't you money of your own?"

"Not till I'm twenty-one."

"Or relatives to go to?"

"No."

"But you can't go to work, Blanche! You simply can't! What could you do?"

SHE began to mention her plans, but he did not wait for her to finish.

"No, no!" he broke in. "You couldn't stand it! Why, as a governess you'd be practically a servant, and a store or an office—why, you simply have no idea how horrible this world is! You don't—"

"I know more about it than I did yesterday," she put in grimly.

"Yes, but a clerk! You can't be a clerk!"

"I don't see what's to prevent me."

"I will!" he cried. "Look here, Blanche—I'm twenty-one; I've got enough money to keep us awhile, and I love you! Don't you love me?" Through the darkness she was aware of his intense gaze. "Say you love me!"

Like a swallow skimming through the dark, a sudden thought of Alan startled her. Strange that she should be thinking of him now! Strange, too, that at this time there should come to her the memory of an episode all but forgotten: that night in the garden when Alan came running after her as she was going home, and awkwardly thrust the friendship ring into her hand. She still had the ring. She kept it with her mother's watch in what she called her "jewelry box."

Ray's fervid pressure was hurting her hand.

"Say you love me!"

"I—I don't know," she whispered.

Sharply he drew back, but the withdrawal was like that of a wave which recedes only to come surging on again.

"Don't know!" he burst out. "Why, of course you know! Haven't you missed me? Haven't you been thinking of me all week? Weren't you miserable because I didn't come around?" And without giving her a chance to reply, he answered his own questions: "Certainly you were! You *know* you've missed me! Didn't you just tell me you woke up yesterday at dawn thinking about me? That proves it! I tell you you're just as much in love with me as I am with you! You've got to be! I'll make you!" He dropped her hand, and grasping her by the shoulders, shook her. "You've got to love me! You've got to! And you're *not* going to work! Never, never! You're going to marry me, Blanche—that's what you're going to do! We'll get married tomorrow!"

MARRIAGE! Tomorrow!

She had never thought of marriage save dimly, as something which might happen to her in a future distant and unknowable. Why, she wasn't even out of high school yet! It wasn't a year since she put up her hair, and she had never had a skirt that reached all the way to the ground.

"Oh!" she breathed. "I don't see—I don't know how—" But her faltering words were smothered against his coat as he pressed her to him.

"I'm going to get you out of here!" he rushed on exultantly. "Lord, but it'll be wonderful taking you round and showing you New York! Those lovely eyes of yours will be bigger than ever when we cross the ferry, and you see the ships moving up and down—ships from every corner of the world—and then we'll—"

"My hat!" she murmured, reaching for it. "Oh, let it go!" he cried, and snatching the hat from her head, tossed it aside with an impatience so characteristic, and in the circumstances so droll, as to surprise Blanche into a shy little laugh.

For some mysterious reason this shy little laugh made her feel more at one with him, and with a sigh she relaxed, luxuriating in a sensation of profound contentment very restful after the strain and fatigue of this long day. Ray had found her staggering under a great burden and magically had eased the load. It was sweet to know that some one cared, sweet to feel this sense of his protectiveness.

A suburban train rattled past. When it was gone he bent and kissed her.

Only a few days ago she had been asking herself how people knew they were in love, and already the question seemed to have been answered for her. This blessed sense of peace, of trembling happiness—this must be it!

The steadily mounting interest of this great American novel brings it to a compelling climax in the next installment—which appears in our forthcoming June issue.



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~Spring!

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Protect the Blossoms

THE business of being a parent is difficult at best. There are days when everything seems to go wrong, when Jimmy is mischievous and Janet is disobedient—days when the children are so exasperating that you forget what they really mean to you.

But at night, when you steal quietly in for a last good-night look, how like blossoms they seem—exquisite promises of the future. You dream of the things you hope to do for them—of the advantages you wish to give them—of the gifts you would like to lavish upon them. But has it occurred to you that there is something else that perhaps you should be doing for them right now?

Today—Before It Is Too Late

Use the great gifts of modern medical science to protect your children from disease and to help them become strong and healthy men and women—physically, mentally and morally. Many deadly diseases can be prevented by vaccination or inoculation. Many serious after-effects of common diseases can be avoided by proper nursing. Do not risk the blighting of a single blossom.

Three Important Things to Do

These are things which, if not already done, you should do at once:

First. See that your children are vaccinated against smallpox.



Second. Make sure that they have toxin-antitoxin treatments to prevent diphtheria.

Third. Have them examined at least once a year to correct physical defects. Especially—teeth, eyes, ears and tonsils should be thoroughly inspected; adenoids, when present, should be removed.

With positive protection offered against two of the most dreaded diseases, smallpox and diphtheria, it is little short of criminal negligence to overlook these simple precautions. And a great amount of illness will be avoided when, as a matter of course, children have an annual health examination.

Can you call yourself a good

parent unless you are able to say, "My children have the best protection I can give them!"

Even Minor Ailments are Dangerous

More children die from measles and whooping cough than from dreaded scarlet fever. Chickenpox and mumps may be indirect causes of death. Some of the most contagious diseases, such as measles and whooping cough, for the first two or three days appear to be nothing but "colds". Even at this stage, before the real sickness is recognized, infection of others may occur.

Frequently whooping cough leads to pneumonia or permanently injured lungs. Unless a child who has measles is carefully nursed, pneumonia, mastoiditis or kidney trouble may result. In not a few instances, an attack of measles is the indirect cause of tuberculosis. Sometimes the little sufferer is left blind or deaf.

Do not make the mistake that some parents have made—do not think that your child must have all the children's diseases, and "the sooner the better". Never let well children play with a child known to have a contagious disease.

Health is the greatest blessing you can give your children. Plan for it now—in blossom time.



For the past three years May Day has had a new meaning. It has become National Child Health Day—the day on which every state in our country takes stock of the health and welfare of its children.

While there have been great gains in protecting the lives of children, these gains have been accomplished by the extraordinarily good work done in some parts of the country. Tremendous betterment will result when the same good work is carried on everywhere.

The new May Day unites us in planning for more

sanitary school buildings, for more and better playground facilities and for unremitting supervision of the water, milk and food supplies of a community. The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company has prepared pamphlets on the cause, prevention and care of almost all the diseases with which children are threatened.

Send for the booklets on Measles, Whooping Cough, Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria. They will be mailed free and may be invaluable to you.

HALEY FISKE, President.

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Chesterfields"



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Hundreds of letters, from women as well as men, are on file, making claims for Listerine much stronger even than the manufacturers of

Listerine would care to make. So if you are troubled with dandruff, you'll be glad to know that regular applications of Listerine, doused on clear and massaged in, will actually do the trick.

It's really wonderful how it invigorates, cleanses and refreshes the scalp. And how it brings out that luster and softness that women want—and men like. Try it yourself and see.

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